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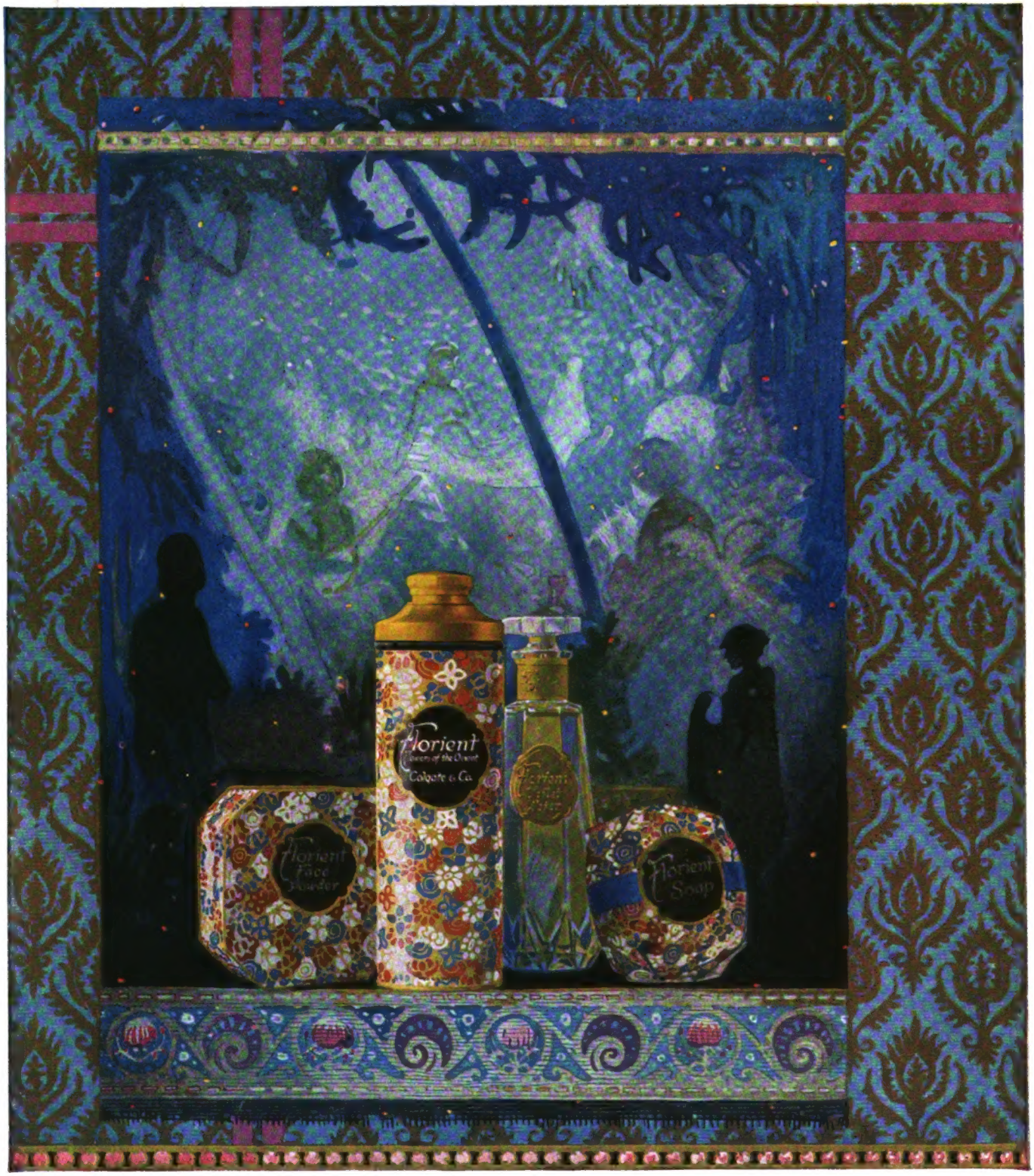

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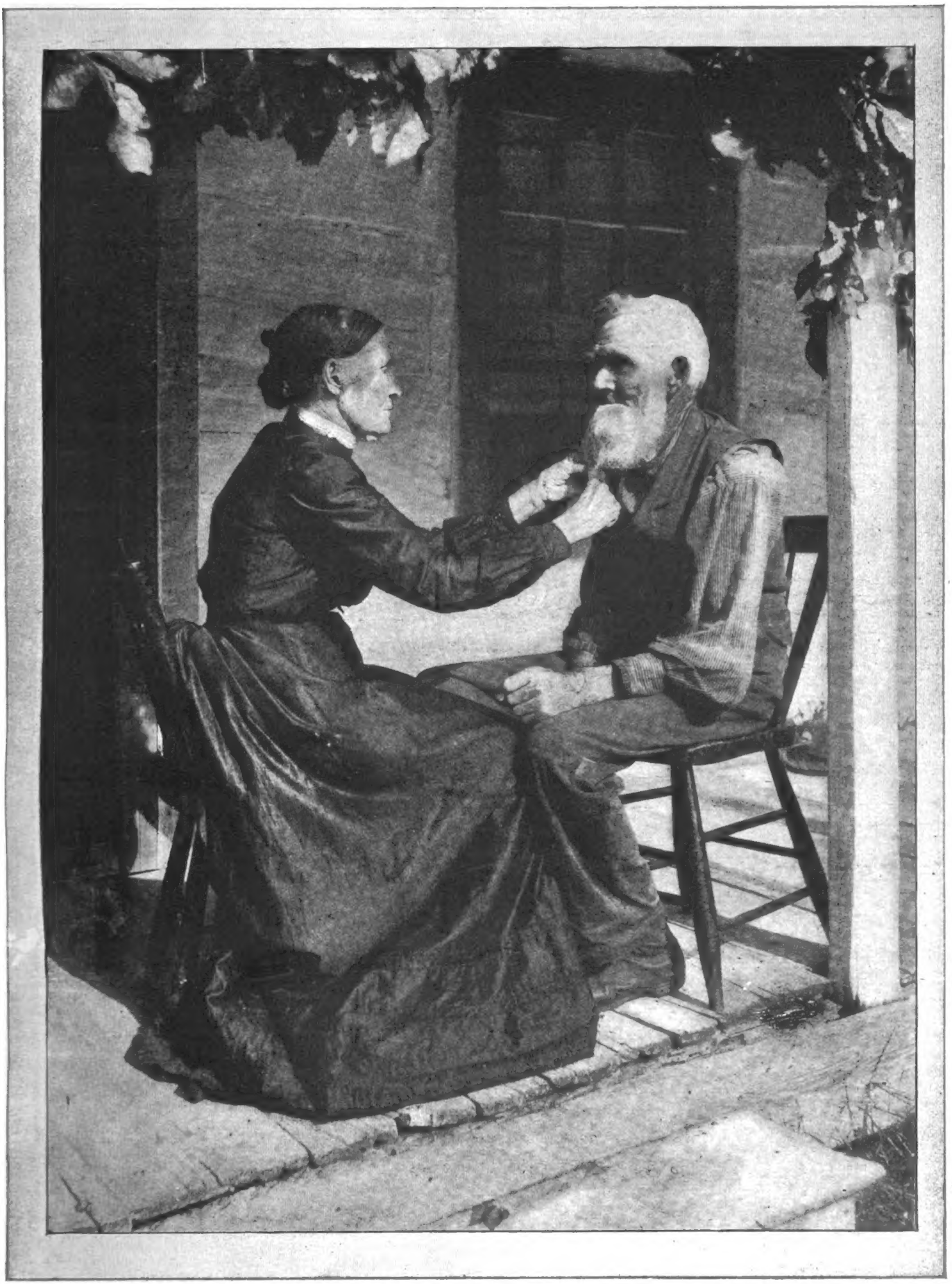

A little sprucing up of a Sunday.

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Everybody's Magazine

NUMBER ONE JULY, 1920 VOLUME XLIII

She would slip him in when the place was full and find him a stool and a corner of the kitchen-table and the richest drippings of the ragout.

The Scoop of Charles Hamilton Potts

By James Hopper

PART I

IN PEACE time (which, for him, had been always) Charles Hamilton Potts had attained a certain local celebrity as the water-front reporter of the Bolinas *Herald*. His column was a delight. One learned from it the movements of the ducks and the geese: "Quite a band of geese passed about here yesterday, going south; guess we'd better be oiling up Old Fowling-Piece." Also of the marine growth: "There's quite a bit of weed in the bay these days. *Some one* has been loafing at that hoeing job." The sun and the stars were not neglected: "That was a fine sunset last night, folks; more of you ought to have come down to the fine new Pacific S. S. Co. wharf to witness that fine sunset."

This is a war story. We are not apologizing. We believe in war stories—as big and vital as this tale of a naive, brave war correspondent on the French front. In a way, it's a humor story too. And whichever element of it you stress, it is one of the best stories James Hopper ever wrote. Of course, as every one knows, he was present at the war himself. After Part I of "The Scoop of Charles Hamilton Potts," Mr. Hopper's next story will be—by way of contrast—a charming fantasy.

Human interest was given its space: "Juan Salvador tipped up in his boat yesterday and got a bath. He didn't yell, 'Come on in, the water is fine,' either, but just yelled blue murder. Was the water cold, Juan?" The weekly appearance of the oil-tanker was always noted: "The *Bedelia* dropped in on us yesterday and paid us a short visit, tying up the pipe-line and going away much fuller than she had come in. It is a lucky thing, for the *Bedelia* coal-oil ain't castor-oil!" Migrations of the finny tribes received due attention: "The salmon are now beginning to run fine hereabouts. Johnnie get your rod, get your rod, get your rod; Johnnie get your rod and go get some!"

Rough physical facts of this material existence were made presentable through arch and subtle treatment: "Some of the boys were out in Peterson's fine new launch on a

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fishing trip last Sunday. Ye scribe understands that, among the ample provisioning made for the demands of the inner man, sufficient provisioning was also made against possible attack by Old Wiggles, the Sea Serpent. Old Wiggles failed of appearance, but Father Neptune was on the job, or as might be better said, on the heave all right; thus occasioning among our town's best people no small amount of 'that funny feeling.' We understand the fishes were all duly fed, and that they will all be immune a long time now to the bites of Old Wiggles."

The water-front column was appreciated even of the sophisticated guests of the great "Hotel Del Mar," Palm Beach of the West Coast, which raised its many wooden turrets a mile from town. Reading the column, they had a vision of a good-for-nothing and amiable loafer who sat all day on the last rafter of the dock, dangling his feet and puffing his pipe, one eye closed and the other lazily noting the small happenings of the happy little port.

As a matter of fact, Charlie Potts's material was all gathered in one wild three-minute rush, for, besides the water-front, he also covered the Police Court, the Justice of the Peace, the Town Hall, the Jail, the Morgue, and the Elks Lodge, the tennis tournaments, swimming races, polo games, dances, luncheons, and society doings of the "Del Mar"; also composed an occasional editorial, solicited advertisements, read proof, made up, and wrote his weekly column on the Open Road in which, for years, every Saturday night, the stuffed-in denizens of Bolinas learned of the pure joy there lies in going afoot along an endless highway, far from butchers, bakers and bills with not one sou in one's pocket and—amiable inference—not one care in one's coco.

THIS was Charles Hamilton Potts in peace time. When, in April, 1917, his country entered the war, Charles became the prey of an intense agitation. As is usually the case, this state came of the hostility between two opposite facts, *i. e.*, his desire and the possibility thereof. On the one side, he wanted to take part in the war. "Let's go," his soul said. On the other——

On the other, he found himself that day just forty-nine years old, with a total weight, in clothes encased, of one hundred and nineteen pounds. And in those forty-nine years he had not been at all bellicose, and those one hundred and nineteen pounds he had never thrown into any of the empty activities which have been the mysterious pleasure of so many of his contemporaries—the swatting of a soft ball over a net; the slamming of a harder ball into the air with a club, or the kicking of a bigger ball about with one's feet. His pleasures had been intellectual; for recreation and rest, he played "Home, Sweet Home" upon the saxophone.

But to return to the first side, at the foundation of his great desire to go to war was the fact that he had Ancestors. It is true that perhaps few of these Ancestors would have recognized him at first sight. He had a pale, pear-shaped visage sprinkled with freckles; blinky eyes without visible lashes, and long ears like the handles of an urn: his general expression was one of stupefied innocence, and when he walked, it was with one sloping shoulder ahead, as though he apologized for taking up so considerable a portion of the universe—which he didn't.

However, if some of the Ancestors might have shown a disposition to disclaim him, he had no such intention toward his Ancestors. He meant to hold them to contract—and they had gone to war. In each war of the Union there had been an Ancestor of Charles Hamilton Potts. A great-great-grandfather had fought under Washington, a granduncle had gone to Mexico with Scott; Charles's own father had been a bugler with Sheridan.

If Charles did not get into this war, this would be the only national war without a Potts in it. Thinking of it, Charles wept secretly into his pillow at night.

MEANWHILE, one by one, all the young men were leaving the town for glorious posts—in the infantry, in the artillery, in the flying corps and also, it must be said, in the quartermaster service and the naval reserve. Two of the three town physicians had gone into the medical corps. The sadness of Charles was daily becoming heavier while his body lost weight—that body which had none to lose. One morning, in front of "Oppenheimer's White Emporium," Jimmie Norris, the town attorney, shook his hand in that brisk, significant manner Charles had, of late, so well learned to know. "Good-by, old man, good-by!"

"Why, where are you going, Jimmie?"

"Oh, I'm off—off with the others. I join an officer's training-camp to-morrow!"

The interior of Charles was now all wishful unhappiness, and finally he told his wife—which is what he should have done at first. Mrs. Potts—Annabelle King Potts—a large and capable woman, possessed of an unillusioned understanding that had enabled her to bear without shrieks her husband's rather futile fussing with life, listened calmly while Charles unburdened himself.

"So you want to go to war!" she echoed, when she had the gist of the matter, fixing him the while with a look of careful appraisal which was not at all flattering. "So you want to go to war—you with your hundred and nineteen pounds!"

She was now gazing over Charles's head, gazing far away. "Well," she added, to Charles's tremendous surprise, "I don't blame you; I don't blame you at all, Charles Hamilton Potts!"

She continued to look into distance, then in a detached manner, as though she had forgotten her husband, standing there like a small boy, she said: "When that fracas is over, any one who hasn't been in it will feel like a pee-wee all the rest of his life—like a miserable scrubby pee-wee!"

She now turned to Charles, with that brisk manner—almost too brisk, he sometimes half thought, though he never dared to fully think it—which she assumed whenever she came to a decision, and spoke three sentences:

"You are going as correspondent.

"Go to Mr. Wilde right away, and find out what he will do for you.

"I'll see to the rest."

Charles went to see Mr. Wilde. Mr. Thomas D. Wilde was the owner and editor of the Bolinas *Herald*, of which Charles was the staff. Charles passed through the small outer office, swung open a swivel door, dodged a clanging press by turning sharply to the right, and entered the sanctum—three partitions not quite reaching the ceiling—in which the boss sat at an encumbered table, a long smutty proof in hand. "Mr. Wilde," said Charles, with the curt courage of the shy, "I want to go to the war."

The editor looked over his spectacles and made a queer gesture with both his short fat arms, as though to guard his paunch from a sudden blow aimed there. But he recovered sharply and, very still, with distended nostrils, sniffed what seemed to him to be the scorched odor which hovers about a strike for a raise. Second sober thought reassured him. From Henry, the devil, perhaps—from Garcia, the janitor, still more likely—but from Charles Hamilton Potts, a demand for a raise—impossible! Still, one might as well be careful.

"And how do you think you are going, Charles?" he asked mildly.

"As correspondent," Charles answered, with that assurance he bore for a full fifteen minutes after an interview with his wife. "I'd like to go for you, Mr. Wilde. As special correspondent for the Bolinas *Herald!*"

This was worse than a demand for a raise. Much worse! Much worse! Here was danger of losing Charles—faithful Charles—useful Charles! The editor's heart began to pit-a-pat. "Canny—canny," he said to himself. "Let's go slow, let's go careful."

"But Charles—" he began.

He began, but stopped abruptly. In the midst of his rapid cogitations as to how best parry the present peril and halt his precious collaborator in his disastrous caprice, he found himself caught in the contagion of splendor. Suddenly there had appeared before his eyes a superb vision: he saw the front page of the *Herald* a-crackle with burning red head-lines, and underneath the red lines, in black type, rigorously unassuming: "From Charles Hamilton Potts, our special correspondent, with our armies in France!"

AFTER all, this was no time for petty calculations. We were at war, *at war!* The entire country was in convulsion. This was a time for risk, for sacrifice, for Exalted Patriotism! The editor, with a jump, changed his course. "I'll send you, Charles," he said splendidly.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Wilde!" said Charles.

The editor looked at him long, contemplatively. "And now, for the terms," he said, with a certain severity.

"Oh, yes, the terms," said Charles vaguely.

"You understand, of course," said the editor, "that while you are over there, you won't be here."

"Yes, sir—no, sir," said Potts, with concentration.

"While you are over there, I will have to have another man to take your place here."

"Yes, sir."

"While you are over there, I will have to pay that man your salary."

"Yes, Mr. Wilde."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. In spite of that, in spite of having to have another man and paying him your salary, I'll still pay *you* your salary."

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Wilde!"

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Charles felt like going down on his knees and kissing the editor's fat hand, but remembering his century, merely looked very happy and, without ironical intention whatsoever, added: "That will fix us both up fine, Mr. Wilde." Upon which he returned to his wife.

"Well," she said cryptically, when he had told her, "it's exactly what I expected. Just exactly.

"I've fixed up the rest," she went on. "I got Mr. Stanley of the 'Del Mar' over the phone. He was quite agreeable. We're going to give you a benefit to send you away. That great pianist—what-do-you-call-him—Prussenheimer is stopping there just now, and he'll probably play. He's hardly likely to refuse, considering that name of his!"

THE benefit concert took place at the "Del Mar" a week later. The Mayor of Bolinas opened with a few touching words of God-speed to dear old Charles, whose Open Road had been to so many, for so many years, such a lesson in simple content. Now we were at war. This was no time for simple content, but for high endeavor. The Mayor invited every one to join in this high endeavor, and the musical program followed.

The program had not been very difficult to fill; four of the numbers were auto-suggestive—"The Star-Spangled Banner," "America" and "The Marseillaise" sung by the High School Glee, and "Over There" by Hathaway Fairbanks, the "sweet" tenor of the First Presbyterian. But the Miller sisters also volunteered, appearing with twin curls down their necks, twin fiddles in their hands, and playing with a team-work marred only by the fact that each twin put more concentration in listening admiringly to the long notes of the other than to a correction of her own. Louis Burble, of the local bank, played several Scotch songs on the oboe, and the Debussy Ensemble (lately the Haydn Quartet) got their rounded mouths close together and hung desperately to the full chords of "My Old Kentucky Home" and "The Long, Long Trail."

The great Prussenheimer came upon the platform. He was patently out of humor, and pounded ragefully through the saccharine treasures of Massenet's "Meditation."

Later, in the lobby, there took place a little scene. To Mrs. Cameron King, beplumed patroness, came Mrs. Frank Dowd, also beplumed, but whose eminent capacity for patronizing had been overlooked. Said Mrs. Dowd to Mrs. King: "My dear, I don't see why that pianist was allowed to play that Schubert Serenade. All that Hun music should be barred." Said Mrs. King to Mrs. Dowd: "My dear, that wasn't Schubert's 'Serenade'; it was Mascagni's 'Intermezzo'!"

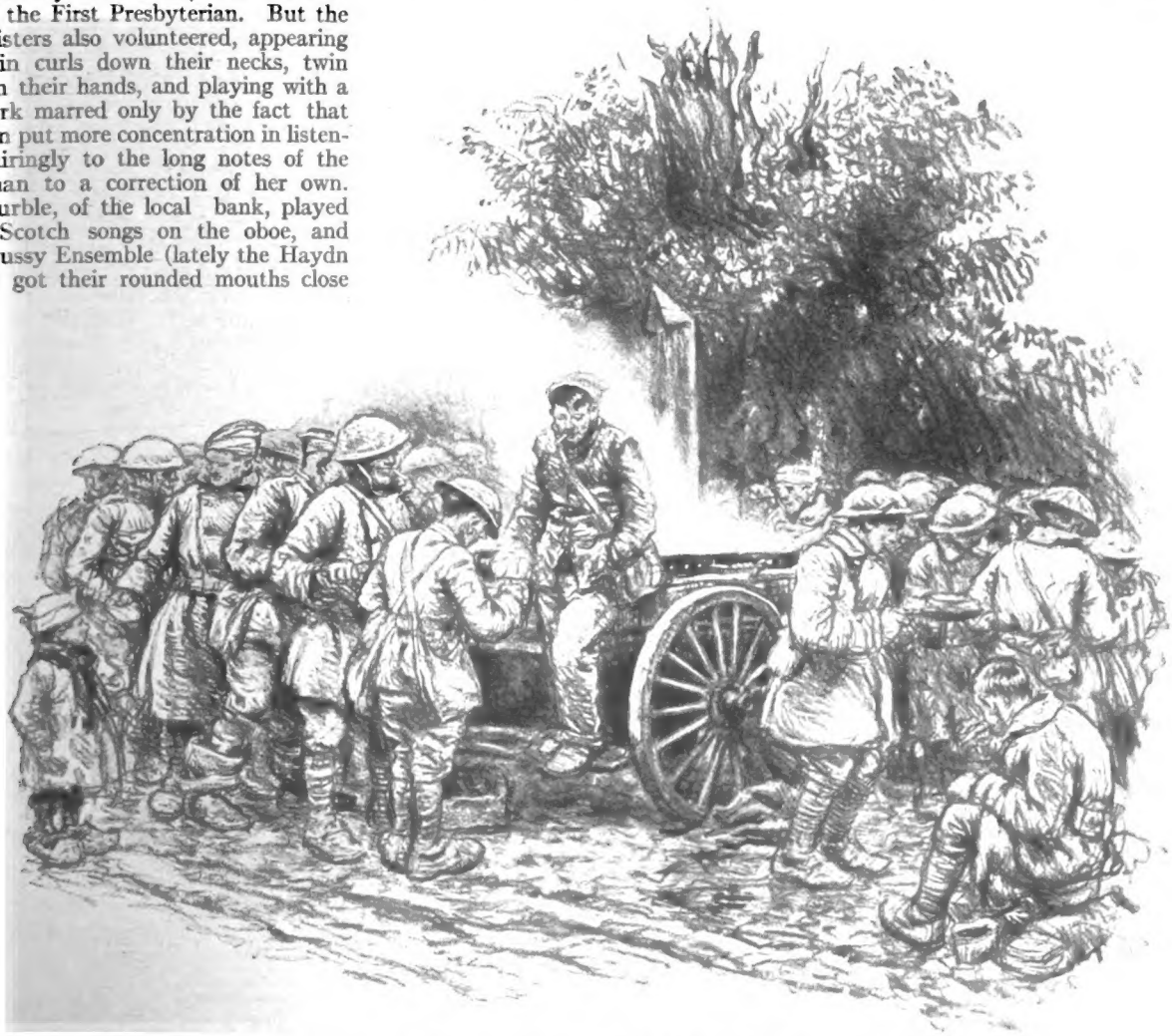
The concert was a success, and three days later Charles Hamilton Potts departed with a fat purse—or at least, one which would pay his fare all the way to Paris. After that, there'd be the salary. His wife placed him firmly on the train, then stood by the platform during the trying wait. Neither said much to the other.

Charles owned a slender, wistful soul that felt a good deal, even though vaguely, but which lacked the explosive force necessary to outward expression. As for Mrs. Charles, who held undivined in her ample bosom a capacity for perfectly tempestuous demonstration, she carefully and vigilantly and ever kept all outlets corked—for fear of scaring mild Charles to death. The train departed. "Good-by," said Charles Potts; "Good-by," said Annabelle Potts.

SIX weeks later, Charles Hamilton Potts, War Correspondent, appeared at Press Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Force, at the front, in France, and there was sniffed at with surprise, then tranquilly dropped in contempt, by the brilliant, high-strung beauties of the Press already established there.

He was but a "visiting" correspondent; they were "accredited" correspondents. The world will never sufficiently realize the profound abyss which separated the two categories. Let it be something to say that the accredited correspondent wore a green brassard with a red C, while Charles's brassard was an ignominious white; that the accredited correspondent swanked a Sam Browne belt, while no belt at all draped Charles's tenuous form; that the accredited correspondents, told by the regulations to wear "officers' uniforms, without insignia of rank," pranced about in long shining boots and terrible spurs and breeches the hue of a shy feminine blush and looked like major-generals of cavalry, while Charles wore doughboy shoes, doughboy puttees, doughboy "pants" and the old canvas shooting-jacket which, for so many years back home, he had misered in the hope of some day going hunting.

This uniform business had given a bad



Everywhere you went you were apt to come upon a line of doughboys filing by a mess-kitchen, kit in hand.

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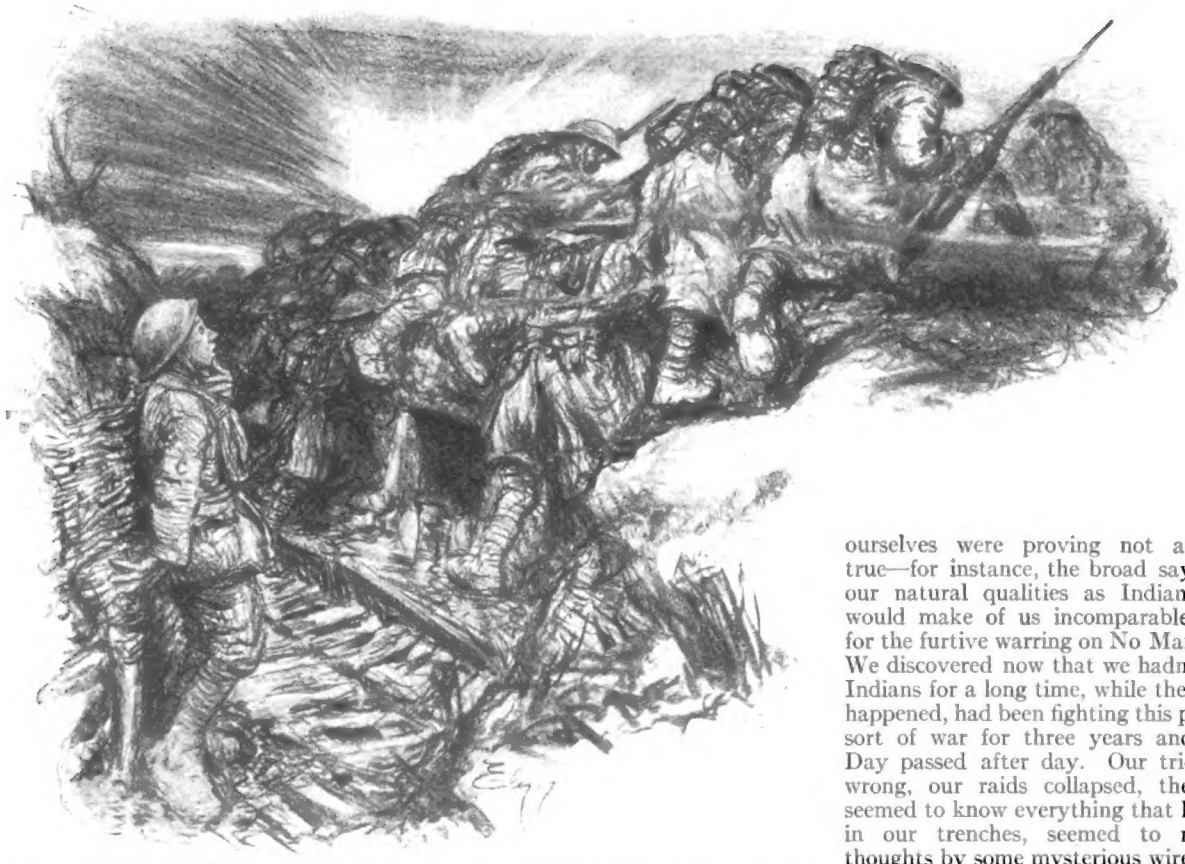

From end to end of the trench the men were climbing out, kicking their toes into steps cut in the earth, holding their rifles out of the mud.

moment to Charles. When, in Paris, at the Press office there, he had been told by a young lieutenant, who sported spurs and boots under a mahogany table, that he must have a uniform to go to the front, he had passed two days of horrible perplexity. Then, opening his trunk, he had found as if by miracle the old canvas jacket packed there. (Oh, dear, capable wife!) Here was a beginning; here, in fact, was the main thing—a jacket being the principal foundation of uniform, the pillar, one might say, though other things might be also recommendable.

IT WAS just the right khaki hue—with a shiver Charles remembered that when he had bought it long ago he had vacillated between this and a mouse-colored one. Much heartened, he now went lightly about the business of giving the jacket its complements. In a manner slightly irregular—irregular enough, in fact, to prevent us from giving the exact details—within twenty-four hours he had obtained from a private his puttees, pants, shoes and shirt.

Now, all equipped and at the front, he found that there was some advantage, after all, in belonging to the lower order of correspondent. The accredited aristocrats, for instance, were under three-thousand-dollar bond. Three thousand dollars! The accredited aristocrats were furnished automobiles by the army—but they paid for the use of these automobiles ten dollars a day. Ten dollars! Charles, now that he understood the situation better, was content with his white-brassarded, Sam-Browneless state. He didn't have to pay anything to ride in an automobile. But here was the rub: visiting correspondents—these serfs, these villains—were allowed only four days at the front. Four days, and then whisked back to Paris.

Charles solved this difficulty in his own way. When the four days were up, and he was on the point of being deported back to Paris, he disappeared; so neutral of tint was he, so unaggressive of outline, it was easy for him to disappear. After a proper interval, he reappeared and began to loiter about. He did it so humbly, with so little trouble to any one, with so wistful a neck-arching and so apologetic an eye that the officers at the Press Section had not the heart to notice him. If Charles had been of importance, and hence of peril, the other correspondents would jolly well have seen to this; their vociferations would have reached Saint Peter or even George Creel himself.

But with one or two glances, with one or two seemingly careless questions innocently answered, they had thoroughly "sized up" Charles. Said one to another, in a friendly moment one day: "The poor fish—do you know what paper he represents?" "Haven't asked him yet." "He represents the Bolinas *Herald*. Do you know the Bolinas, California, *Herald?* That's what he represents—the Bolinas *Herald*, the Bolinas *Herald!*"—great volcanic trepidations of secret mirth.

SO CHARLES stayed. This was in the winter of 1917-1918, on the Toul front. We had then (shivering beginning for what was to prove a most glorious ending) one poor division of regulars, dissolved by large recruiting to the point where it was not at all regular, huddled, blue with cold, in the slimy, crumbling trenches of a stagnant sector. It was a time of disillusion—of the disillusion which precedes the dawn. Many nice things we had thought about ourselves were proving not accurately true—for instance, the broad saying that our natural qualities as Indian fighters would make of us incomparable soldiers for the furtive warring on No Man's Land. We discovered now that we hadn't fought Indians for a long time, while the Huns, it happened, had been fighting this particular sort of war for three years and a half. Day passed after day. Our tricks went wrong, our raids collapsed, the Boches seemed to know everything that happened in our trenches, seemed to read our thoughts by some mysterious wireless, and rather played with us the game called duck-and-drake.

ONE day, they would abruptly send over a tremendous broadside of gas shells, and our boys would forget to put on their masks; the next day, with the masks all on, the sudden bombardment proved to be of high explosive, followed by a raid of unmasked men fighting clear-eyed while our men were muffled. Gradually the confidence, based upon the erroneous assumption that simply because we were ourselves we must be better than the other fellow, waned, and we began all over again on the basis that, if we only learned all the other fellow knew, being ourselves we should know more than he did.

By the month of February, 1918, the only single great ambition of the American Army in France had come down to a fixed desire to catch one German prisoner. Just one. For so far not one had been taken.

The town in which the Press Section was stationed was well back from the lines, out of cannon range and ear-shot, and the correspondents went to the scene of activity every day in their big, swift machines as a big business man drops down-town in his limousine. Charles had no big, swift machine. Neither did he have a little, slow one. For a time he was marooned in this town of the back area. It was perhaps just as well; for all of his energy was needed for the solution of the simple problem of living.

He had himself billeted, which changed his rent from four francs a day to one franc and placed him in a garret, upon a narrow cot. Carefully keeping away from the officers' mess where the other correspondents dined when in town, he began to experiment in the obscure eating-places—and found at last a little "gargotte" within

(Continued on page 68)

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The Real Game

By Lawrence Perry

DONALD GATESON swung off the Knickerbocker Limited at Wickford Junction, then paused on the platform of the little station as though struck by some dominant impression. As he stood thus in the midst of his luggage—which included two tennis racquets in a press—his eyes fell upon a girl in a flannel suit with a black sailor hat—a trig, resilient sort of girl who was gazing upon him, as it seemed, tentatively.

Reading from Gateson's expression that he recognized without perhaps placing her, she nodded brightly. The smile, which was wholesome and engaging, brought her clearly to the young man's mind. He moved toward her with an enthusiasm which the girl, not aware of his mood, must have found somewhat surprising.

"Miss Stowe! It's bully to see you! I'm awfully glad!" Noting her expression he stopped abruptly, laughing in that chuckling way which she had always found so attractive. "I'm sorry," he went on. "I'm acting like a man who has just returned from the Arctic Circle. But, do you know, I feel that way."

She smiled but did not speak. She was Mrs. Amelius Hassard's social secretary, a position which—for want of something better—she had taken after her graduation from Bryn Mawr two years before. She had never known Donald Gateson, as it were, upon the same social plane; but his friendship with her employer's daughter had brought the two into contact occasionally.

Then she had seen him playing tennis at the Casino. He was one of the first ten in the national tennis ranking and for this reason, if for no other, was extremely popular with the Newport set, who had turned out many expert poloists, yachtsmen, racquet-players and the like, but had not in the course of many years produced a lawn-tennis player of Donald Gateson's proficiency.

Gateson was talking to Janet Stowe rapidly, eagerly, and she was nodding as though following him intently. But she was not. Her thoughts were back in the past year. She could see that he was taking for granted her familiarity with all that had happened to his family. The downfall of the elder Gateson following a financial set-to in which, with greater valor than discretion, he had joined issue against a group of former associates who had proved to be far more powerful than he, was a story, for that matter, with which every one had been familiar.

Thinking about this she lost that diffidence which his exuberant, almost intimate, manner had caused in her, and gave to him the comradely sympathy she had long felt for this clean-cut boy who of all the young men she had encountered in Newport had appealed to her as least affected and least spoiled.

"I think I understand, Mr. Gateson."

You don't have to be a tennis player to get the values of this story. It's tennis, but it includes also love, and a fine attitude toward life in general, shedding a good deal of light on the question hinted at in the title. Mr. Lawrence Perry has written for EVERYBODY'S almost every kind of sport story. They are always sport *plus*.

They were moving together toward the little shuttle train which was to bear them to the Newport boat. "When I was a senior at college my family went to pieces. It rather altered my outlook."

"Were your people from New York?"

"No, Baltimore," she answered. "The reason I spoke of myself was that I wanted you to know I appreciated your making good with—with no start at all, really."

"I was a pretty idle, footless duffer."

"Oh—" she preceded him into a seat—"I didn't mean that."

"Well, I did. Of course I didn't realize it at the time. Funny how a chap's viewpoint changes with conditions. Those past years seem pretty useless now." He glanced musingly out of the window. "Yet I had a good time."

"Yes, you had a good time," she caught him up with an unexpected vehemence. "But what did it all amount to? I mean compared to this past year? I—I heard Mr. Hassard say the other night that Mr. Van Winkle had told him you were the most promising young man in his banking house and that—I don't really remember all he said. But it was awfully flattering."

"Mr. Van Winkle said that?"

"Yes, to Mr. Hassard."

"JOVE, that was great!" He beamed upon the girl in open satisfaction. He leaned toward her confidentially. "Do you know I bucked out the minute things broke? I've worked like a pup ever since—practically twelve months without lifting my head from the galley sweeps." He studied her a moment, then went on: "Of course I haven't kept in touch. That was part of my plan—a new deal all round. Has—has Nathalie Hassard—still, I don't suppose you'd know."

"Know what, Mr. Gateson?"

"Why, I wondered if she had sort of forgotten me."

Janet Stowe frowned. She decided to be frank. "Where competition is so keen, you know, one mustn't bury oneself."

"But she knew what I was trying to do."

The girl wanted to pat him on the hand with sympathy and say: "You poor boy, haven't you been long enough in this world, especially *your* world, to know the law of the wolf-pack by which the one that falls is the one either eaten or left to die?" Instead she smiled slightly: "I didn't mean it. As a matter of fact, I *have* heard her speak of you."

His glance was speculative. "I see," he said at length. He shifted the tennis racquets with his foot. "These fool things!" he laughed. "I'm sure I don't know what I'm going to do with them."

"You're here for the tournament at the Casino. Have you had much practise?"

"About twice a week in the early evening the past two months—clay courts. I got down to the turf at the West Side Club last week." He shook his head, eyebrows raised deprecatingly: "I was only fair, to say the best of it."

"I'm sorry. But I understand. At Bryn Mawr I lost the college championship just because—" She stopped abruptly.

"So," he smiled, "you were a tennis expert, too. I didn't know you played."

"I don't. Not any more. It was in college." She smiled. "A long time ago."

"It's too bad. One works like a blooming beaver over one's game, raises it notch by notch and, then——"

"And then," she broke in, "the real game—the real work of the world. Tennis is all right, of course; but the things you've done in the past year amount to more than anything you ever did, or hoped to do, on the courts. I—" She broke off suddenly, laughing. "That's preaching, isn't it? I'm lecturing you like a schoolma'am. But it's true, just the same."

AS SHE talked he watched her closely, noticing the expressive changes of light in her gray eyes, the play of her mobile lips, the perfect teeth, the deft modeling of face and throat. She had poise, she had character. In the past he had often looked at her with admiration—yet rather impersonally, too; merely as one of the appendages of a household perfect in all its human and inanimate appointments. He wondered now how he had ever been able to do this. Why, she was splendid!

"I get you perfectly," he said when she stopped, smiling at him in embarrassment. "To be frank, you're wondering why the deuce I'm trying to pick up the game again." As she made no reply, he continued: "You were a tennis player, so you'll appreciate a certain sporting instinct which makes a man want to know what he can do with his game. If you remember, I was runner-up in the national singles last August. One hates to stop—that is, without a fight."

She nodded; but in a perfunctory manner, as though not greatly impressed. "Is that the reason?"

"Well, in a way, yes. Of course Nathalie Hassard had something to do with it."

"Of course." She hesitated a moment. "You weren't really engaged, were you?"

"Why, no—not really. We were getting to a pretty good understanding, though. In fact, I should say we were practically en—no, I won't say that, since I can't

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speak for both of us. Anyway, when things broke as they did, whatever existed between us was off. That was my doing. I bucked out, naturally."

"Did you ever feel that—well, that your tennis had a lot of attraction for her? There," she went on, as he did not immediately reply, "I've offended you. I had no right to say it, anyhow."

"No, you haven't offended me; not a bit. Yes, I suppose there isn't any doubt my tennis was the opening wedge. But it wasn't all. I mean the personal side developed a lot. At least I think it did—I had reason to think so. You think tennis was the whole thing, do you?"

"Why—no, I don't. I don't really think that at all. Only—I caught the idea you were going to try to renew anything you may have lost in your year away by picking up tennis."

"A forlorn hope. Is that what you mean?"

"No; not at all. What I mean is, why tennis? Why not make your appeal on what you are as a man? What you are doing now? If you don't think these things would appeal, then why on earth should you wish to appeal at all to her?"

"But, hang it, Miss Stowe, you don't understand at all. I've been away a year. I've been as game about Nathalie Hassard as I could. Twelve months! Now I want to see her. And the only excuse is my tennis. You know I haven't set Wall Street on fire yet."

She caught the note of pathos and was profoundly stirred. "Perhaps," she said, "I was wrong. But I've admired so much what you have done; I thought Miss Hassard, to be worthy of you, should admire it, too."

"How do you know she doesn't?"

"I don't. I hope she does; she ought to."

"Thank you. As to my tennis, I think I was a bit modest in speaking of it. As a matter of fact at the West Side yesterday I seemed to have everything. You've no idea how good it felt."

"That's fine." She changed the subject, talking rapidly about a trip to Providence in a launch on an errand for Mrs. Hassard, the breaking of the crank-shaft and the necessity of her taking the train to Wickford on her way home. "Which," she laughed, "is how you came to meet me."

He scowled, for the personal note in the conversation thus far had been precisely what he needed. But the girl evaded all his efforts to restore their talk to that plane.

When the boat which they had boarded at Wickford Landing stopped at Newport, he saw her to one of the cabs which lined the wharf.

"Good-by, Miss Stowe."

"You aren't coming to us?"

"Oh, no," he laughed. "This is a mere flyer on my own hook—no invitation, nothing. You see with the market the way it is, I can take only a week this summer. So I selected tennis week. I'm going to be pretty much of a recluse—but I'll run out to Sea Crags, perhaps to-morrow after the game. Give my compliments to Nathalie Hassard. And I'll see you again, of course. I—" He hesitated, lifted his hat and turned away.

DOWN below the Reading-Room on one of the quaint old-tree-lined thoroughfares which lead off Bellevue there is a boarding-house patronized chiefly by the families of young officers stationed about the Newport naval base. Here, instead of several more fashionable places where he would have been welcomed—at a price, Donald made application for a week's board and lodging. He succeeded in obtaining the last room in the house, a small apartment on the rear of the first floor.

His intention had been to dine in the house that evening, but somehow when he had changed his clothes and arranged the contents of his bag he couldn't quite make it. It was not that he had not accustomed himself to comparatively humble methods of living in the past year. He had with Spartan will done just this, finding himself as adaptable as any young American in similar plight.

But Newport was different from New York. In the metropolis it was all something of an adventure; here, where every breeze, every sight and sound were suggestive of lightness and color, of indolence and happy irresponsibility, of the sheer joy of being alive, he found it impossible to disassociate himself utterly from the past.

This worried him, for he had counted upon this element of complete detachment as a powerful factor in the campaign he had planned. However, he couldn't dine in that boarding-house this first night. As to that he was absolutely certain. Sunday night in a Newport boarding-house!

LIGHTING a cigaret with irritation, he made his way to Bellevue Avenue. On the veranda of the Reading-Room he caught a glimpse of several figures, but having no desire to be recognized, he averted his face from the ugly old frame building and had almost passed it when he heard a familiar voice calling his name. Glancing toward the club, he saw his father rising from one of the wicker chairs. It stood next to a chair occupied by Amos Flint, of all men! Amos Flint was the potent captain of finance whose suddenly inspired enmity to his father had resulted in the Gateson collapse. But now the demeanor of both men indicated nothing but equanimity. His father, in fact, was chuckling as he advanced to the gate.

"Suppose you came up for tennis, Don. Good for you! Hope you win out. I'd like to sup with you. We're waiting for Flint's motor to take us to the yacht club. Going straight to New York with him on his yacht."

"Going with Mr. Flint?"

"Yes." He squeezed the boy's arm excitedly. "We're on Easy Street again, my boy."

"Easy Street?"

"You bet you! You can get out of that hole in Wall Street as soon as you want. I've taken one of the Cunard cottages for your mother and sister and wired them to come on from that rotten place at Crest Hill. They'll be here in about ten days; have to clean things up where they are. Next summer we'll have our place here again. Glad I only leased it, eh?"

"But—but—" Donald's voice caught. "For Heaven's sake, Father, tell me about it! Tell me everything!"

"There isn't much to tell. I had a certain specialized knowledge of Raritan which Flint needed. He stumbled along without me for twelve months and then when he realized I had what he had to have, he sent for me—day before yesterday. He's agreed to reorganize the Illinois-Kansas which he wrecked over my head, and I've just been made—will be Monday, I mean—will be made president of the Raritan with a large stock interest. I must get back to him. We're as thick as thieves—all the more so because of the scrap. Eh?"

"Wonderful, father! Simply corking!"

"All right, then. Hold up your head, Don. We've come back."

Mr. Gateson slapped his son's shoulder, renewing his good wishes for success in the tennis tournament, and hurried back to the Reading-Room.

FROM the time Donald could first remember him, his father had been too busy for them ever to become well acquainted. But he admired him as an all-round man, was grateful for his kindliness and indulgences—in brief, loved him as much as a boy can love a father whom he really does not know. The thrill of deep satisfaction which the news gave him was at first wholly unselfish—for his father.

"Bully for the pater!" he muttered. "Whoever yet kept a good man down?"

Then suddenly there came into his mind a sense of his own altered prospects. The picture of a humming office in Wall Street, of tickers clicking, telephone bells jingling, buzzers sounding; of a desk piled high with tally-sheets and correspondence, visualized itself. He heard in fancy an alarm-clock summoning him to rise at seven-thirty A. M.—an alarm-clock in a stuffy little bedroom. He stopped short. It was as though a load had fallen from his shoulders. Instinctively he raised them, shrugging his relief.

"George!" His palms crashed together. What—what would Nathalie Hassard say now? He could imagine the smile which would drift over her shell-pink face slowly. Nathalie did everything slowly, carefully, cautiously. She was like her mother in this—rather definite, even in her pursuit of the main chance. She could not be blamed for that. No, it was one of the things he had admired in her. She was no fool. A girl can not be a fool; things are pretty bad against a girl at best—simply because she *is* a girl and not a man. So far as that went, she had given him very many reasons for believing that she cared a great deal for him.

He remembered their last talk. It was in New York after he had been beaten in the final round of the tennis championship. The disaster to his father had occurred the early part of the week. How much it had affected his game he could not say. He had never tried to determine. He was not fond of alibis. But the two things combined had pretty definitely—in his own mind at least—settled his status with Nathalie Hassard. She did not have to intimate this in that last talk. He told *her*, as a matter of fact; he did the interpreting.

As he recalled, she had shown as much feeling as he had a right to expect. She had been greatly wrought up over the match—she was, in fact, a devotee of all things athletic. He had never been able to determine whether it was this, or whether it was her feeling for him, which had led her suddenly to place her arms about his neck, draw his head down and touch his forehead lightly with her lips.

It was her good-by at all events.

His present venture had contained

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Instinctively his racquet flew up to protect his face.

elements of desperation. Yet the plan was well enough conceived. He had not heard from her directly for a year; nor had he made any effort to communicate with her. None the less the lamp of his devotion had burned with a bright flame—a flame the brighter because this affair had been his first. All his life he had been pretty much of a boy's boy and a man's man. And so, it may be suspected, he had been as much in love with loving as anything.

Certainly the ideal of Nathalie Hassard which he had erected, which he had worshiped, which had spurred him and inspired him in New York, had very little relation to the real girl.

THE fact remained, though, that in the end he had to see her, to see her under conditions as favorable to himself as could be made. Hence the decision to regain his prestige at tennis, forlorn though the effort might be. It was all very pathetic in its youthful optimism.

He was striding forward with the intention of going straight out to Sea Crags and claiming a place at the dinner-table, when suddenly he paused in front of the Casino. Somehow he could not bring himself thus early to apply the initial test of his campaign. Rays of the setting sun were lying athwart the avenue, which, relieved of the weight of afternoon traffic, gave an impression of somnolence broken only by the passing of a glittering limousine or touring-car or a smart horse-drawn brougham with coachman and footman, relic of a graceful and picturesque past.

The Casino itself revealed a Sabbath-evening primness. In the arched entrance he saw two young men whom he recognized as tennis-players standing in front of the bulletin-board.

One, a veteran California player, turned as Gateson came up. "Hello, Don. You have the honor to-morrow, I see. You're on the grandstand court, bracketed with Tom here."

Tom Benedict, a slim young intercollegiate star, who played a wicked left-handed game and seemed destined to highest honors in two or three years, smiled diffidently. "Just my luck to draw you, Mr. Gateson. It means I go out before I really start."

"Don't be too sure," Don laughed. "I haven't played any tennis at all, really; just knocked the ball around a bit—I think I'm the one that's out of luck. Whom do you tackle, Army?" He glanced at the draw list and then whistled. "Major Pomeroy, the Englishman. I played him at Wimbledon in the service matches two years ago. Doesn't lob where he can smash the ball. He's strong backhand and fore, too."

Armstrong grimaced. "He beat you, didn't he?"

"Yes. I was pretty bad, though. I'd been flying up to within a week of the match. Still, he's good, darn good—the best they have over there."

"Most of the tennis crowd was here this afternoon," said the Californian, "Pomeroy among them. He seemed quite upstage in his manner."

"He's an ultra-British aristocrat," shrugged Donald. "I didn't care a lot for him, although he was decent enough to me in his way."

"I didn't like him at all," returned Armstrong with his serious drawl. "He's put up with one of the cottagers, the Hassards. Miss Hassard was here with him this afternoon. The two seemed to be regarding us as a bunch of freaks."

Gateson prodded the young man playfully. "You're a sensitive old bean." He paused. "Staying at the Hassards', is he? Well, he would. As a matter of fact, he's an old friend of Miss Hassard's. Most of you put up anywhere special?"

"Oh, we're scattered around. The cottagers were just as hospitable as ever. Tom Benedict and I turned down our invitations and went to a boarding-house. This social lion stuff is lots of fun, but it doesn't help your game. Don, I didn't hear about your bust-up until yesterday. I'm certainly sorry that——"

"Thanks, old man. Reports were greatly exaggerated, though. I'm sorry I couldn't put some of you up as I did last year. Well, see you to-morrow." Nodding, Don, filled with a desire to be alone, turned away.

MAJOR the Honorable Miles Pomeroy, eh! He recalled having read last September that Nathalie and her mother were guests of General Early Pomeroy at a deer-stalking slaughter somewhere in England. Well? He shrugged. It might possibly be—if the gods were good—that he would have a chance to even matters with Major Pomeroy for the beating at Wimbledon. He hadn't bothered about it much—until now.

There was no one he knew dining at Gunther's. It was Sunday evening. It required no stretch of the imagination to picture the informal gatherings at this twilight hour at most of the houses he knew—men and women in summer attire, graceful, indolent groups about chastely lighted tables, the strains, perhaps, of some worth-while music asserting its spell, the ocean turning to purple, the sky to violet; and the wind among leaf and shrub.

He had not realized how much it all had really meant to him, had not grasped until now the full significance of his father's revived estate. In the midst of his fight of the past year he had looked upon this as froth and tinsel, as something so far away from the realities he was living—so far beneath them—as to be negligible. But now—he felt a warm thrill stealing over him. He was to be a part of it all again—he was to return after a temporary dip into a vivid experience—work, fight, toil, which meant in the last analysis, what? Why, merely the power to buy back what had been lost.

Now there was no necessity for this; none at all. He could slip back to his father's office and resume the old habits, going from his desk and coming to it as he wished—and the long, indolent,

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happy summers! And Nathalie Hassard!

Donald rose from the table, summoned a taxi and was driven post-haste to the boarding-house, which now appeared tawdry, sinister and depressing beyond endurance. He packed his belongings, paid the woman of the house a week's board, and then went to a place where they talk in terms of lodging only when they know who one is.

Next morning Donald breakfasted at nine o'clock and then, feeling in a luxurious mood, he ordered a horse-drawn victoria, reclining in the seat with the air of a Roman tetrarch as the horse cloppity-clopped up the avenue. From the standpoint of the approaching competition this mood was good for him, was a greatly needed tonic. He knew now that the preceding evening he had been afraid of Tom Benedict. Now he felt a tingling along his shoulder muscles; his arms and his legs were steel springs. He was afraid of no one.

SWINGING his racquets negligently, he walked through the Casino entrance on to the graveled walk of the lawn with its bordering gardens, its loitering groups, and thence to an inner enclosure devoted to tennis. Upon the courts on either side players entered in the tournament were already in action.

Passing along to the dressing-rooms he saw Major Pomeroy having it nip and tuck with Armstrong upon the club-house court. Nathalie Hassard was seated upon the lower veranda with her mother and small brother. She was leaning forward, intent upon the game, her lips parted, her eyes glistening. Donald stopped to look at the perfect quarter profile, the gleaming light hair flowing over the temples in ripples and waves from under a fragile sea-green hat which matched the gown.

"Hey, Don Gateson! Aren't you going to play this morning? Hurry, for the love of Mike!"

Don turned and smiled at Jason Currier, who was running the tournament. "All right, old chap. I sha'n't be late." Turning, he hurried toward the dressing-room, in the doorway of which he encountered young Benedict on his way out. The two grinned at each other.

When he emerged upon the veranda, Pomeroy and Armstrong had finished their second set.

"The Britisher has won two. I'm afraid Army is up against it," said Benedict, who had been watching the game while waiting for Don to come out.

Gateson nodded somberly and the two players joined in the procession of those who held tickets for seats on the grand stand court. Even Donald's popularity and Benedict's growing prestige did not win the patronage of the bulk of those who had come to the Casino, most of whom were engrossed in the match between the well-known Californian and the English star. There were many empty seats upon both sides of the court when the two rivals had tested out their strokes and were ready to play.

Young Benedict took the first set rather easily at 6-3. Gateson's best game had always been a hard game and he played that way against his opponent, the result being many balls netted, many double faults or drives which went out of bounds. The next set he played more carefully and, employing to the full his greater knowledge of the strategy of the game, drawing Benedict out of position and driving through him, mixing his strokes both as to variety and degree of vigor, he took the set at 6-1 and the next at 6-4.

The fourth set stood 7-7 when Donald, coming around the net to change courts, saw that Nathalie Hassard had entered her box. Pomeroy, fresh from the shower, elated over his victory against Armstrong, was with her. The two were absorbed in each other. Miss Stowe, who evidently had been invited to come into the box, sat a bit apart. She nodded and smiled as Don's eyes met hers. Now he remembered she had been there throughout. He stopped abruptly, gazing at her. Then he hurried into his place to receive the serve.

He took the game, making the score 8-7. On his own service he threw caution to the winds, delivering the ball with every contortion, with every ounce of dynamic energy, for which he was famous. When he had the game 30-0, two double faults in succession set the players even. Benedict got the next point and then with an ace. Donald brought the score to deuce. He won vantage on a short court rally.

With the game at set point, match point, he was winding up for his serve when a chorus of laughter from the club boxes so threw him off that his first serve struck the ground five feet in front of the net. Glancing in the direction of the sound, he saw Nathalie Hassard dabbing her handkerchief to her eyes and Pomeroy playfully admonishing her against further outburst. The referee politely requested the spectators to cease from sounds that would tend to distract the players. In cold rage Don launched himself into his second serve, practically a blind effort which cleared the net like a streak of light, clipping the chalk at the far corner of the court—an unplayable ace.

Hurrying up to the net Donald seized Benedict's hand. "Sorry, old man; your time will come."

HE TURNED his face toward the Hassard box. The occupants had risen and were making their way toward the exit. He put on his sweater slowly and then followed in the train of retreating spectators. Nathalie, as he had hoped, was waiting by the gate, Major Pomeroy standing a bit to one side.

"I heard, of course, that you were to be here, Don. And you didn't call me up! I don't have to tell you you weren't passably civil. Where are you staying?"

He told her, and she admonished him lightly for not letting her know.

"We should have wanted you to come to us, of course—although," she added, "I am wondering how you might have endured the presence of your detested rival, Miles Pomeroy." She smiled toward the young major, who was engaged in conversation.

"An impossible situation, naturally," he laughed. "I suppose I may see you."

"Why, I should hope so. Any time, of course. We haven't anything special on all week. You must dine with us. Mother would love to see you, Don."

A silence fell, and Gateson, nodding, turned away to the dressing-room. As patently as it could be done politely the girl had registered that she was not greatly interested in Donald Gateson, a fact which made him grit his teeth under the cool spray of the bath. By the time the week ended he would have something more specific from her than a general invitation to dine. He would have much more than that. Faint heart never won fair lady.

None the less, despite brave intentions, dinner that night was a somber affair. Several old friends had been decent about their invitations; but to all he had pleaded the necessity of an anchorite's life while he lasted in the tournament, the importance of which, as a line upon the national championship later in the month, was recognized throughout the country.

AT DUSK he sauntered forth along the quiet avenue, eventually turning into a street lined with hedges and trees, leading to the cliffs. Through the leaves he caught glimpses of candlelight where people were dining. There was a breeze redolent of the sea, soft, alluring, romantic. It seemed as though he were alone with the twilight, a part of it.

He passed the entrance to the Hassard place, Sea Crags, whose broad lawn on the seaward side ran down to the Cliff walk. And there, facing the sea, was the figure of a girl. Donald fancied it was one of the maids, and was turning up the walk when something about the poise of the figure struck him. It reminded him of Gibson's drawing entitled, he remembered, "Fore."

"Oh, Miss Stowe," he said, advancing toward her. "I knew you were to be here," he added as the girl turned, "which is why I tore myself from a stupid, lonely dinner and hurried up."

"Really! It's a great tribute. I was watching that great star on the horizon. It has come up every evening the past few days. Do you know its name?"

"Why, yes; the tennis star."

"Oh, of course. I should have known. I used to specialize in astronomy, too. Besides I was sort of associating that star with you as you came up."

"In what way?"

"I don't think I'll tell."

"Don't tease. Tell me."

"Well—the star of your destiny." She laughed at her little melodrama. "It—it told me you were going to win this tournament." She stopped abruptly. "Do you know, I've got to be awfully keen on your winning? I rooted this morning like a—a—maniac. That may surprise you after my uplift talk Sunday."

"No, it doesn't. I like it. But do you know, I liked that uplift stuff too. It helped."

"Oh, I'm still keen on the uplift; don't think I'm not. But I'm a sport, too."

"Hurrah for you!" Donald glanced at her, hesitating. "Mind walking along a bit? It's like a new ocean to me. So you liked my game to-day," he went on as he fell in step at her side.

"I did, awfully. You are the same old star. I think, really, your backhand is better than it was last year. You always used to use it, you know."

"So you've been reading the tennis experts in the papers?"

"I have not. That's unkind. I don't think I'll talk tennis to you any more."

"Forgive me!" He seized her arm impulsively, then let his hand fall.

"I think," he said, "that year in business was good for my game. I don't know just how; but it has given me something solid that I needed." He wondered how she would feel if she knew he was beyond the

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"Do you know I've got to be awfully keen on your winning? I rooted this morning like a—a maniac."

need of further slavery in business. He didn't want to tell her.

"Your year has been good for everything, not tennis merely." She checked herself abruptly. "There I go again! I vowed I'd quit preaching. And I will. Just the same, you know how I feel."

Really, the secret was getting too good to keep. Or, taking it in another way, was it chivalrous to permit her to remain under her illusion that he was still down and out, or a struggling toiler? No, he decided, it was not; and yet for the life of him he could not enlighten her. In fact there was the glimmering of an idea that in withdrawing from the fight he was losing something big in the interest she had taken in it. He pondered the thought, feeling the vague presence of something very fine and precious. But he lost it in a laughing remark of hers about his thoughtful mood.

WHEN he came to leave her, he confessed to a sense of reluctance. She was excellent company, her mood changing from grave to gay as the moment suggested, with a fine play of girlish fancy and yet an underlying foundation of solid character.

"I suppose," he said, "I'll see you again."

"Why, I hope so. I want you to know I'm pulling for you every way, in everything."

"Thank you. I enjoy talking to you a lot—I mean you really give a fellow something. It's—it's fine. You were a lifesaver to-night."

He struck across the lawn, and after he had gone a few steps he turned to watch the resilient white figure making its way under the stars.

In the next few days the newspapers began to talk about Donald Gateson's game. In the second round he disposed of Warren, winner of three state championships, in straight sets, and his third victory was over Holcombe, who stood number four in the national ranking. In the fourth round he was opposed to the national champion, the man who had defeated him for highest honors the preceding year, and succeeded in turning the tables after a strenuous five-set battle.

It was after this engagement that Nathalie Hassard accosted him as he was leaving the Casino. She had been loitering in the office, evidently awaiting him.

"Aren't you going to speak to me, Don?"

Not all the combativeness of a stiff fight on the courts had left him. He paused, staring gloomily at the girl. "I've been here four days now. I began to wonder if I really knew you well enough to speak."

She laughed, as they came out into the lobby. "Donald, do be decent! Come, I'll drive you around in my car."

They crossed the avenue to where she had parked her roadster.

"We might run around the Drive; there's plenty of time, really. I'd ask you to luncheon, but Miles Pomeroy will be there, of course."

"What the deuce difference does that make?" Don stared at the girl.

"Oh, none really, don't you know; except Miles has some silly notions about sport. He's different from most Englishmen; he——"

"He feels he may have to go up against me on Saturday and wants no social amenities until our differences are decided."

"Well, I suppose so. He's prefectly silly, of course."

"Yes, to put it mildly."

"It is sort of boring. I've told him so."

"Some one said the other day, Nat, that you were going to marry him. Are you?"

"The things one hears! Do you know, if the vague report that his brother was killed by an elephant in Africa is true, Miles will be in line for an earldom?"

"Then am I to salute the future countess?" Donald's face was flushed, belying his even voice.

"Don't be silly, Donald, for Heaven's sake! Oh, by the way, Don, *Town Tatler* had something interesting to-day. Mother read it at breakfast. Is it true about your father?" She swung the car deftly into the Ocean Drive.

"Yes, I believe it is; quite."

"Gorgeous! You don't know how glad I am, Don."

He placed his hand upon her gauntleted fingers. "How much does it really mean to you? I want to know right now, Nat. You've never been out of my thoughts for a whole year. What does it mean to you? Do you feel toward me as you did? Is there any chance? I want to know."

"Don, you'll make me run this car into the ocean."

"Then stop the car." He kicked off the switch with his foot and the roadster came to a halt.

She turned to him, flushing angrily. "Why did you do that?"

"Because I asked you a question that I want you to answer. What does this mean to you?"

"Really, Don, I don't know what it means—if it means anything aside from how glad I am for you. You have an important tennis match on day after to-morrow. Don't you think you ought to concentrate? If it weren't for that, I'd tell you that's no way to ask me a question, anyhow."

"Is there anything definite between you and Pomeroy?"

"No, there is not. Nothing definite between me and any one. And seriously, Donald Gateson, you shouldn't upset yourself this way. You have Miles Pomeroy to meet probably. And the national championship——"

SHE was smiling at him, and suddenly it came to the desperate youth that the one great chance of pushing his suit for this girl was to defeat Pomeroy and then come through to a national championship. He was not enough of a fool to think that through proficiency as an athlete he could definitely win or hold Nathalie Hassard, but it would, he now believed, regain for

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him at least the foothold he had lost. And that was all he asked for the present.

"Yes," he said quietly, his hazel eyes blazing. "I have to meet Miles Pomeroy, who beat me at Wimbledon and seems to underestimate the honor of having me lunch with him. Come to think," he added, "that little matter strikes me as a bit personal."

"Oh, I don't know," she shrugged.

Both were silent as the car took them to Donald's boarding-place.

NEXT day on the club-house court Donald defeated a left-hander who had come through to the semi-finals by virtue of the fact that his opponents had relied upon a reputedly weak backhand, whereas his backhand was not at all weak—merely deceptively awkward. This Donald knew, having in previous years played against the man, in California and in service games. So he had no more trouble than he expected in winning the match. Pomeroy was more desperately extended in beating a former national champion who showed signs of regaining much of his earlier form.

Gateson, immediately after shaking hands with his opponent at the conclusion of his game, went to the little fence that bounded the court. Janet Stowe, one of the comparatively few who had watched his match—Pomeroy and the former national champion being the stellar attractions of the morning—saw him coming and waited.

Don knew he wanted to see her. Yet he did not quite know why. Perhaps he was curious to learn if she had come to know of his tacit deceitfulness the other evening and resented it. He did not want her to be resentful. She was sort of a rock to him somehow. She was smiling—which relieved him. He gazed at her admiringly. There was not a more poised, a more becomingly gowned, more generally attractive girl at the Casino.

As her full voice spoke a word or two of congratulation, Donald shrugged and was about to make a remark whose banality would not at all express his mood, when suddenly, his eyes fixed upon her face, he grew rigid, utterly in thrall of the thought or mood, or whatever it was, that filled him. For a moment or two he stood thus while the girl, watching him curiously, sensing something she could not explain, flushed and then turned pale. Deeply, almost with longing, they searched each other's faces.

Without a word he turned away.

That afternoon after luncheon he set forth alone upon a long walk out past Paradise and on and on among the rolling hills with their stone walls and quaint farmhouses, with over all that breath which hints the advent of autumn. It was dusk when he returned; his face was set, but in his eyes was a light that bespoke serenity.

When Donald arrived at the Casino next morning, the scene was suggestive of Newport tennis at its brightest and best. On one of the courts they were finishing a doubles match, but all other courts were abandoned, interest centering upon the grand-stand arena where an American star was to uphold the prestige of his country against a foreigner. Miles Pomeroy was the first Englishman to show extraordinary merit since the Dohertys, and as a consequence his game in the United States had been eagerly and enthusiastically followed by the tennis-loving public of his country.

There was sunlight on the green sward, on the trees, on the shubbery, and in the gentle breeze from the sea was the tang of burning sedge. The stands on both sides of the court—the permanent club-house stand and the temporary structure—were ablaze with summer millinery and gowns, while the male enthusiasts with their hat-bands and ties and flannels, themselves contributed no somber note. As Donald walked into the enclosure behind Pomeroy, the scene carried him back to the days when as a small boy he had sat in this enclosure. But that was an older day, before tennis had become one of the most rigorous sports in its demands on gameness, agility, endurance and stamina.

Pomeroy, a lithe young man of medium stature, with heavy dark hair and eyebrows and straight, pointed mustaches, wore a polo coat. He made his way into the arena with insouciance, swinging his racquets to and fro in the limbering process.

"Hullo, Gateson," he said carelessly as Donald came up.

"Good morning." Don nodded shortly and called "rough" as a racquet was thrown into the air.

His guess was correct and he elected to serve first. For a few minutes the two rivals knocked balls across the net to each other, trying a variety of strokes in the process of attuning their eyes to distances and testing their certainty of touch. Both young men were scrupulously polite, but that neither had amenities to waste was clear to many close observers.

The men who had been playing in the tournament, who had been playing against one another throughout the summer at various places—they are a clannish set who know one another very well—were seated in groups either by the umpire's elevated stand or at either end of the court back of the little boundary fence. They were all for Gateson, of course; so, with very few exceptions, were the spectators.

Deep silence fell as the two principals walked to their positions. Donald reached his first and stood bouncing the ball between the ground and his racquet while waiting for his opponent to get into a receptive position.

AS POMEROY crouched warily, Donald tossed a ball into the air and then with all his force, with an intricate gyration of his body, of his limbs, he sent the ball whistling. It hurtled against the top band of the net with a vicious slap and fell back into the server's court. With no perceptible diminution of energy Don delivered his second serve. It cleared the net like a streak of light; but Pomeroy, whether by intuition or luck, had stepped into its path, meeting it as it zipped up from the turf, with a lightning forehand.

The ball whizzed back as swiftly as it had come—a perfectly marvelous shot—hanging to the grass, raising a spurt of chalk as it struck the backline at a far corner. A volume of handclapping rose, and Pomeroy, who had converted what looked to be a certain ace for Don into a point for himself, walked nonchalantly back to his position.

Such a Roland for such an Oliver may prove unsettling at the outset of an important tennis match. It proved so in Donald's case. Outwardly he voiced congratulations upon his rival's shot, but inwardly he was irritated. He double-faulted twice in succession and then with the score 0-40 he sent an easy return into the net, yielding to Pomeroy a love game on his own service. In changing courts for the second game Don walked to the umpire's stand and took another racquet. But he knew the fault was not with his bat. He could not seem to fight the irritation that filled him, could not conquer it, probably because it was an emotion new to him in tennis.

Pomeroy had a serve that twisted and was generally elusive, out of all proportion to the effort he apparently spent in delivering the ball. It was not unlike the late Anthony Wilding's "googly" service, and as it had bothered Gateson at Wimbledon so now it bothered him. It would draw him to one side or the other and then Pomeroy with great aplomb would cross-court him. The Englishman took the set with ease.

In the first game of the second set with the score at deuce Don did that which he told himself he would not do. A shot had drawn Pomeroy inside the service line and the American lifted a lob to the corner backline. His opponent, death on lobs that were at all playable, slid under it gracefully, and with a tremendous stroke sent the ball over the net with a force so great that it bounded twenty feet into the air and flew out of the enclosure.

INVOLUNTARILY Donald glanced toward the Hassard box. Nathalie was laughing and applauding; so were the other occupants. Janet Stowe of course was not with them. As a matter of fact, he had seen her in one of the seats near midcourt on one of the lower tiers of the opposite stand. At the time she had been talking to some one. Don turned to the court and after a brief rally chopped the ball into the net, the game going to Pomeroy. By careful placing Donald won two games in sequence. Pomeroy got the next and then made it 3-2. The Englishman had extraordinary control of his shots and in the long court game which he had forced upon Donald the issue of the match did not appear to be in doubt.

Pomeroy took the set at 6-4.

Winning the third set he would take the match. And this seemed likely to happen. Donald had made some brilliant shots, but his play had on the whole been streaky, many of the drives going into the net when he had plenty of time in which to direct them, while not a few shoe-string shots went true—which is not the way to win tennis matches.

As Don came to the umpire's stand to wipe off the perspiration, he was filled with that dreadful feeling of futility which comes to an athlete when he is off his game and doesn't quite know why. To make matters worse, there was the conviction that he had it in him to defeat this man; had it in him—somewhere. Yet he was not beating him; he was being beaten, and that without great effort on the part of his opponent.

He threw the towel aside and, lifting a glass of ginger-ale to his lips, he glanced over it toward the grand stand, toward Janet Stowe. The girl's eyes were fixed eagerly upon him and he suspected that the very intensity of her gaze had drawn his attention.

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When she knew he was looking at her, she moved her hand slowly upward and shook her head in emphatic negative. Then she brought her right hand down into the palm of her left, nodding at him and moving her lips. The pantomime was perfectly legible.

"You are playing too soft," he read. "That is what Pomeroy wants. Don't play *his* game, play yours. Stake all. Go in and razz him. Come up to the net."

Yes, the net. He had permitted Pomeroy to drive him back too easily—either with lobs or sharp cuts to one side. There was no doubt about it. He nodded at the girl, and then walked into the court. Hereafter Pomeroy must play *his* game—win or lose.

Yes, the net, the slashing net game. That, after all, was his game. If he couldn't play that, he might as well stop right now; he was beaten. Either he had to beat his opponent down or himself be cut down. There was no alternative.

He served a sizzler—unplayable. He drove the next one down the middle line. Pomeroy was just able to get it, making a weak return—luck to make any—which Donald whanged cross-court for his second point. On his next serve he rushed up to the net. But Pomeroy played the ball before his adversary was able to get in position to handle a ball which shot cleanly through his backhand.

Donald served again, took the net, and met the return with a half volley. Back it came, to the left now, fast. Again Donald chopped it back. But Pomeroy was determined. He clipped the ball in an effort to pass. Donald, leaning far to the right, blocked it—beautiful net play. Pomeroy came up on the run as the ball dropped into his court and sent it into the net, while a roar of acclaim greeted the winning of the point.

WITH the score 40-15 Donald served another ace and took the game. A warmth passed through him. It was only one game, to be sure, but it marked a reversal of form which was gratifying not alone to Donald but to the spectators who, truth to tell, had not been greatly thrilled by the play thus far. For Pomeroy was not spectacular—except in his smashes of lobs; on the contrary, he was at most junctures deliberate, precise. As one of the observers remarked, he suggested in his finesse nothing so much as an expert billiard-player. Donald's play, too, had been far from the fiery sort for which he was famous.

In the end Don took the set 6-3, the last point coming on a lob he was forced to make which Pomeroy drove clear beyond the back line.

It had been a grueling set for Donald. He had been dynamic in his energy every minute. Mighty glad he was of seven minutes' rest interval which marked the conclusion of the third set. Yet to win, he must go through two more sets equally—if not more—grueling. And he was not in the best of condition for a test of the sort. In fact, through lack of adequate preparation, he was in rather poor condition.

But the cold shower did a lot for him; so did the dry clothing he put on—and he was young. That is to say, he was twenty-four. He ran across Pomeroy in the shower room. He smiled and Pomeroy nodded. On his way to the enclosure he paused, and then crossed the short space from the umpire's seat to the grand-stand enclosure, where Janet Stowe was standing in the aisle waiting to get into her seat.

"Thank you, Miss Stowe," he whispered as she bent over the railing.

"You're feeling quite all right?"

"Oh," he shrugged, "I'll win this set. Lord knows about the next—but this set I'll win."

And he did. He was fury incarnate from the first ball to the last. In his highest moments he was nothing short of McLoughlin at the greatest of that peer of all players. Pomeroy, beaten down, none the less played his careful game, studying each point; as it were, noting how he had lost it, analyzing throughout the form of his opponent. It seemed at times almost as though, knowing he had a set to waste, he was storing up knowledge against the final and deciding issue—and letting Don wear himself out before it arrived.

IN TRUTH Don gave much of himself in winning that 6-4 set. He was unsparing; he had to be; for at no time did the Englishman permit him to be in any situation where it was feasible to let down. And, in any event, he had to win this set. The next must take care of itself.

A grunt which was heard all over the court escaped him as he came up to the net on the first serve of the fifth set and smashed a ball, a sound which told of energy dearly expended. But he took the game after it had gone to deuce. He noted that Pomeroy was beginning to take his serves a bit back of the base line—which was encouraging.

Pomeroy, serving, took the first two points of the next game, scoring them after brilliant rallies in which the ball traveled back and forth over the net time and again, as hard as it could be hit until the spectators leaned forward breathless. Both points were lost when Gateson took the bit in his teeth and stormed the net, being passed by lightning shots.

The Englishman made it 40-30 when Don sent a hard drive just out of bounds. At least the linesman at the point called it out; many of the spectators in that section of the stand manifested exception to the ruling by sharp aspirations of breath.

On the next point Don sent a ball to the corner, which Pomeroy reached after a hard run, hitting it backhand. It came to the net and struck the band near the top. Donald, rushing toward it pell-mell, pulled up suddenly. Then perversely the ball simply rolled over the right side of the net and fell into Gateson's court without even a bound. A low groan swept through the stands.

That groan found echo in Gateson's soul. For in that mad dash to the net and the sudden pulling up, something seemed to have gone wrong with the big muscle of his left leg. It hurt him when he walked upon it. And he was dog-tired. That final test hard tennis always brings had come—the test of underlying grit and gameness and stamina and sheer fighting quality; the last residuum.

From then on he played more by instinct than by anything in the way of conscious volition. The stands faded into amorphous banks of vague color. Upon the screen of his mind was nothing but an oblong stretch of turf with white danger lines, a mid barrier that must be avoided, and a dark featured man with gleaming black eyes and sweaty black hair on the other side of it.

As in a dream he could hear the droning voice of the referee announcing at intervals the status of the match. He was conscious, too, of a stabbing pain in his left leg which ran up into his side. The ball came to him and he hit it, as it were automatically—although, of course, it was not that; the fact was that his processes were utterly absorbed, that he had attained concentration beyond which there was no degree. It was this alone that kept him going.

Like the tone of a bell came to him suddenly the umpire's wailing voice: "The games are 7-6, Mr. Gateson leading. Fifth set."

Seven to six! Had they played so few games? To Donald a week seemed to have passed since the first ball had been served in this set. Now by winning he could end the agony. He could lie down on the turf in that shady spot by the corner of the stand and rest and rest and rest.

Pomeroy was serving. Don knew he would have to break through. He had done so before, several times. He would do it now; he must. He came over to the umpire's stand and mopped his face. A glass of ginger ale was standing ready for him. He lifted it to his lips and tasted. There was whisky in it—or brandy. Some well-meaning friend with a handy flask had given him the chance of false stimulation which would carry him along. He had never drunk alcoholic liquor. For a moment he hesitated, dreadfully tempted; then he set the glass down quietly untasted.

He returned Pomeroy's twisty serve and Pomeroy, as Donald dashed in, lobbed to the back line. It was a perfectly calculated shot, a shot calculated to clear Don's reach and at the same time to take steam out of him. Donald, sprinting with all his power, was not able to reach it.

"15-love," came the wailing voice.

An instant later it was 30-0 as Pomeroy served unexpectedly a gentle serve with a terrific back spin which caused the ball to bounce backward toward the net. Don reached it but was unable to clear the barrier.

"30-love."

The ball came over the net swift and true. Donald caught it with a swift forehand, driving it nicely to Pomeroy's backhand. It came back whizzing. Donald cut it back. Pomeroy returned it. Donald hit it again, a hard drive. Pomeroy got it back.

"Hang it, will he ever miss!"

DON drove the ball over again; this time the Englishman had to run over on his backhand side. With the Englishman out of position Don took the net, sending the return to an unplayable corner. The singing in his ears shut out the clatter of palm upon palm. On the next serve Pomeroy double-faulted; only his second double fault of the match. It was a God-given boon to Gateson. He made it 30-40 on a lightning cross-court shot.

Set point point! Match point! Not a sound marked the environment of that embattled arena. His breath coming in short gasps, Donald set himself to receive the next serve. It came over with a bad twist. Donald hit it into the net. Deuce!

Pomeroy took the next point when after a breathless rally he cross-courted. But Donald brought it back to deuce when he killed one of the Englishman's lobs.

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Pomeroy's next serve went into the net; his second serve was called a double fault. But Donald thought the ball was in; so did most of the spectators. So did Pomeroy, who turned deliberately to the umpire and scowled. The umpire was sure he was right.

With the score at vantage for Donald, he wilfully knocked Pomeroy's next serve high out of the court, thus relinquishing the advantage that the erring eye of the official had given him. The spectators applauded; even Pomeroy gestured his thanks.

On the next serve Pomeroy was just able to reach and make a weak lob out of Don's return. It fell near the net. Don was under it, striking with all his force, missing the ball completely. But he had time to turn and catch it as it bounded, dropping the ball just over the net, while Pomeroy deep in the back court had no chance to come up.

Set point! Match point! Don felt himself swaying as he walked to his position. He breathed a prayer. The ball came to him. He hit it back. Then as Pomeroy came up on it, Don, summoning his last ounce of reserve, dashed for the net. Pomeroy's eyes glittered. With a venomous swing he swung his bat, aiming not to pass his opponent, aiming in reality to knock his head off. Like a bullet the ball sped to Gateson's face. He sensed its coming; but that was all. He had no time to strike at the hurtling object; instinctively his racquet flew up to protect his face. He felt the twanging catgut drive against his nose. He saw the ball dribble over the net, saw as in a dream Pomeroy dash madly forward, send the ball into the net and himself with it.

For a moment Donald stood blind, a great wave of sound about his ears. He saw a vague figure at the net. He advanced and groped for Pomeroy's hand.

"Well played, old fellow!"

It made one of the pleasantest memories of his athletic career, that crisp voice of a game and fair, if uncompromising, sportsman. There were hands beating upon his shoulders and voices in his ears. He walked to the side; some one threw water in his face. Instinctively he turned toward the club-stand. A girl with blond hair was waving her sea-green scarf at him and smiling and nodding.

He joined the throng making its way toward the exit. Outside Janet Stowe was waiting. He knew she would be.

She watched his coming with eager eyes. When he stopped, flushing, the light of serenity filled her. Suddenly he put out his arm, leaning heavily upon her shoulder for support. She did not move.

"It was wonderful, Mr. Gateson—wonderful! Yesterday I heard about your father." He smiled at her.

"You don't seem terribly enthusiastic, Miss Stowe. Do you mind walking along a bit with a tired, perspire-y man?"

"Of course I'm enthusiastic. Now you'll go in for the national championship and——"

They were walking along the path toward the dressing-room.

"How can I go in for the national when I'm due back at the office on Monday?"

"What!" She stopped short, staring. "The office!"

"Why, yes; it was either tennis—or the real game. Janet, my dear, you've given me some ideas, some big ones. They came to me in a flash the other day when I left you standing here in this very place. Do you remember?"

"Yes." Her voice quivered.

"The—the whole significance of you, Janet Stowe, hit me then." He paused, smiling, watching her closely. "But as to the office I haven't quite made up my mind."

"Oh!"

"No, there's sort of a condition. It concerns you. I must go to the shower now. Will you wait on the veranda of the club until I come out? There's a place out on the cliffs that perhaps you remember. I want you to go out there with me and hear me tell you just how the condition concerns you. Janet, will you wait?"

Her fingers tightened on his arm. "Yes," she said, in a low voice, "I'll wait."

Portrait of a Family

By Sarah N. Cleghorn

WHEN I am out at elbow (which, of late,
Is all the time) the family pretend,
One or another of them—they take turns—
They've just remembered something that they owe me.
Very ingenious, very sharp they are,
To save my foolish face!

At Christmas-time
They all conspire and calculate and save
To fit me out again for one more year;
Prowling through my belongings, with a pencil
Concealed, to list the things I need the most—
Sly, very sly! and there's no stopping them;
They think I would be wearing burlap bags
If they weren't watchful; but they scrimp themselves!
What's one to do?—besides this furtive tear
To think they hardly ever say a word
About a certain pet extravagance—

When I was ill a little for a long time,
Complaining, idle, wan, dull and a spoil-sport,
They took me out for rides, and telephoned
To tell me all the news; Jessie would bring
Ice-cream; Susan made jellies for me; Charles
Brought milk (how rushed he was, too!) from the farm;
They brought me home to the old place, heaven reward them;
They brought the children, God love them! round to see me.

And now that I am well, and talk too much,
Too hotly and too wildly air my views,
Taking it out in words, brave words, alas!
(As if words could accomplish anything!)
My blessed kinsfolk do me this best kindness:
They listen!—and they take me seriously!

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Her eyes were on Paul's. They had amazement in them. She trembled; she had all the appearance of a woman who sees a ghost.

The Little God *of* Hunches

By Arthur Crabb

Here is Sam Hicks again—one of that pleasant group of people whom Arthur Crabb has made as real as your neighbors. Sam Hicks declines to believe in a big hunch this time, but his interest in lovers is unfailing, and furnishes Mr. Crabb, in "The God of Hunches," with another delightful story. Watch for still more in later numbers.

ONE day in the early spring Paul Bancroft took me out from town to the Lanning Club. I noticed that he had a dress-suit case in his car, which observation led readily enough to the fact that he was going to a dance at the Deans' that evening.

I suggested that he dress at my house, take dinner with me, and that we could go to the Deans' together, explaining that Mrs. Hicks was off on a junket. He accepted my invitation.

Paul Bancroft was thirty-five. I had known him for about five years, and I liked him extremely, and my wife liked him. He came to our house often, I played golf with him a great deal, we had lunch together two or three times a week; there was a great intimacy between us, and yet knowing him as well as I did, I constantly had the feeling that there was some big influence in his life of which I knew nothing. It was more than a guess—I could not put my finger on a sign of it, and yet I was very sure that it was there.

He was very attractive; he was above average height, well built, strong and active; he had been prominent in college athletics and was an excellent golf player and an enthusiastic sportsman. He had a delightful personality, he was the best of fellows, yet his good fellowship had no suggestion of insincerity in it, as is so often the case with men who are fond of popularity. He was completely respected in the community, he stood high in financial circles despite his youth, and his personal habits were beyond criticism; he smoked moderately, drank still more moderately, and kept respectable company, especially so far as women were concerned.

If the good character I have given him is to be qualified, it is by the fact that he was an inveterate gambler. Some people looked at him askance because of that trait, but men who were associated with him in business told me that he combined courage and foresight with sound conservatism, that he was progressive, but not rash. It is unquestionably true that he gambled only with his own money, not with other people's, and that he was very careful that the line between the two was clearly defined.

At my house that evening he played with the children before they went to bed and seemed to enjoy it. They were in especially fine condition, and I think that they aroused some sort of sentiment in him, for after dinner, when we were alone, he said to me:

"You're lucky, Sam, to have a place like this." Naturally enough, I thought that he referred to the house, which is certainly a modest affair, but then he added, understanding my confusion: "I don't mean the building, I mean what's in it."

I laughed at him. "You could have one like it easily enough," I said.

"That's much easier said than done," he answered.

"All you need is a good, strong, healthy, intelligent girl to begin with," I suggested.

"Oh, yes, I know it sounds easy."

"There are a great many of them about who would be tickled to death with the job," I said. "How hard have you tried to find one?"

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He looked at me with a curious smile on his lips. "Probably harder than a man ever tried before," he said, and then he added: "Would you like to hear the craziest tale that ever was told?"

I told him I certainly would.

"You know I've got the gambling bug in me and got it bad," he said, "and I suppose you think and have heard that I'm the luckiest man in the world at gambling."

"I've heard that you have a very keen brain, a deep insight and a remarkable fund of knowledge," I said.

"That's all tommy-rot," he exclaimed. "Innumerable men who are a dozen times smarter than I am and know ten times as much, get stung every time they take a flyer in the market or on anything else; whereas over and over again perfect fools stumble on fortunes. Of course that is an exaggeration, but the general idea is correct. I gamble on hunches, Sam, and mighty little else—and between you and me, I'm pretty nearly through. I have only one hunch left and that has nothing to do with business."

"Within a month you'll have a flock of new hunches, and you know it," I said.

"Perhaps, but I hope not. I suppose the darn things were born in me; anyway, I can remember them as far back as I can remember anything. My father died when I was two years old, my mother three years later, and the two estimable maiden aunts with whom I still maintain a legal residence took me in charge. The best that can be said of the arrangement is that, while it may have been hard on me, it was much harder on them.

"THERE was no question of money involved, there was plenty of that; but to have a hell-raising boy of five thrust into their calm and peaceful midst was sure tough luck. Both sides made the best of it of necessity, and my idea of the best of it was to see what I could get away with in the deviltry line, and that's where the hunch business started. Of course, I don't suppose that at five I had any power of analysis, but I had before I was ten, and by then I was playing hunches forty ways for Sunday—and getting away with them.

"I'd consider the perpetration of some act that I knew was wrong and that if discovered would result in a severe penalty, and which on the face of it seemed sure of discovery, and sure, on discovery, to be laid unerringly at my door. I'd do it or not do it, depending on my hunch—that inner intangible feeling of safety or danger, and nine times out of ten when the hunch said 'Yes,' I'd get away with it. Curiously enough I didn't get reckless—I had entire respect for my hunches, even then.

"My aunts sent me to boarding-school as soon as the law allowed, and there I came face to face with gambling. I was the only boy in the school who always had money, and I had it because I played my hunches. I bet on the most absurd things, everything from the toss of a coin to a big football game, but I never bet except when I had that subconscious feeling that a certain thing was going to happen, whether the dope was that way or not.

"Many and many a time I took the short end of a bet when the odds indicated that I didn't have a ghost of a chance, and won. I couldn't force it. I had to let lots of sporting events pass by without honoring them with a wager, because my little hunch-god was asleep and wouldn't give me inspiration. I had too much confidence in him to play him false or to do business without him.

"I imagine that I was not an influence for good in that school. I know that innumerable times I was on the ragged edge of expulsion, but it never came, and then I went to college. I am ashamed to say I paid my way there, entirely unnecessarily, to some extent at the expense of my classmates, but largely at that of gentlemen in other colleges who had a misguided faith, at the wrong time, in their teams' ability to beat ours. My friends got back what they lost to me by playing the tips I gave them on outside events, which eased my conscience somewhat.

"WHEN I left college I went into the brokerage business. When I was twenty-five I came into my money, which amounted to about ten thousand a year. I decided that I could live comfortably on five thousand, and I began playing with the other five as it came in; I didn't touch my capital—I had sense enough not to do that. By the time I was thirty I was rich; I had more money than I could imagine needing for any worthy personal purpose. Then I got interested in rubber, in spite of knowing that I had all the money I needed.

"I studied rubber from A to Z and back again—I decided that big money was to be made in rubber stocks. I came to the conclusion, based on facts and common sense, that rubber stocks were going down; and a lot of other men were absolutely sure of it, just as I was. I began to sell, and then out of a clear sky came my hunch. It was dead against all rime and reason, it was absurd on the face of it, and yet I couldn't get away from the imp who was yelling 'Buy, buy, buy!' at me, and I bought, with every dollar I could beg, borrow or steal.

"If the market had gone down I'd been stony broke or worse, but you know what happened. I sold out at the top and contemplated my bank-account with much awe and considerable regret, for it took a great deal of the joy out of living. I had so much money that it was a blamed nuisance. You may be surprised to know that I have never gambled since for the purpose or desire of making money—what I've done has just been for the sake of watching my hunch work, and the amounts involved have been so small that it didn't make the slightest difference whether I won or lost. I know that isn't the general opinion, but it's the fact, nevertheless.

"I got disgusted with the game. I was ashamed of myself. I hadn't done a worth-while day's work in my life; I'd just gathered unto myself somebody else's money; I hadn't produced a thing. I put money into good industrials, local concerns small enough so that I could have some influence in them, and for the last three or four years I've been doing something for my fellow man, for the city and the country—not much, but enough to give me some self-respect. Now I get more fun out of winning or losing a few dollars at golf or bridge or tiddledywinks or on college games than I can possibly get out of gambling on the market or in any other big way.

"I've proved that my little hunch-god has the goods; I still exercise him occasionally with a few piker bets, but I've lost interest in hunches, all except one—and that's the one I started to tell you about. It's a hunch I've had for a dozen years or more, and I don't know whether it's going to be the one big flivver or not. I think not, at the moment I'm sure not, but the trouble is that my common sense is getting restless and pressing for recognition. It's a merry, interesting battle, but, in the meantime, I'm getting along, and time is precious.

"You just said that there were plenty of the right kind of girls in the world, which is true, naturally, but the trouble is I haven't found one who just fits my ideas of what a wife should be—for me—and Heaven knows, I've hunted more than you or any one can possibly imagine; I've hunted in the highways and the byways, up hill and down, for a dozen years, and I'm just where I started.

"Women have a tremendous fascination for me, and are a constant disappointment. I'm crazy about them in a peculiar way. I think women all the everlasting time. I watch women on the street, one after another as they go by, and the habit has convinced me that human beings, on the average, are the ugliest and most unattractive work of God—they can't compare with other animals, such as horses, cats, cattle, sheep, deer, any of our American quadrupeds.

"But the average makes a fine background, a fine contrast; every once in a while, once a week perhaps, a beautiful woman appears and is worth waiting for. I don't mean the pretty, high-colored, soft-skinned type; I mean the strong, healthy, highly bred, intelligent ones. I remember some of the ones I see for weeks; I form all sorts of conjectures about them, women whom I have seen once for an instant and shall, in all probability, never see again. Of course they don't count—they are simply indications of my frame of mind.

"I MEET a great many attractive women. I go about it with a great deal more method than you would ever suspect, but I haven't found the right woman yet. I dream women, think women, live women. The minute I've finished my day's work I look about for women; my first thought when I'm dressed after golf is of women—to what woman shall I go, where can I find a new woman? I see a woman at the club who looks attractive, and I'm not happy till I've met her and talked with her. When I meet women at my friends' houses I'm thrilled, I'm excited—for a few minutes, an hour at most.

"It doesn't take me longer than that to discover that she's not the woman I'm looking for, and then I'm bored. I've been disappointed, goodness knows how many thousand times; but I go back and back, I search on, my enthusiasm never wanes, I'm always optimistic, I never lose hope. It's the hunch; but if my little hunch-god wants to stand in with me he's got to make this hunch good pretty soon, or get a job with somebody else.

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It was very, very wrong for her to be there with me, and it must never happen again.

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"Don't think that I'm a conceited fool, if you can help it, when I tell you that I can't find a woman that suits me—it has nothing to do with me, it's the hunch working overtime. But I sure want to find my woman. I want a home—not a house—yes, and the house, too—like yours, and as you say, all I've got to do is to find the girl who's satisfactory to me and to whom the job is satisfactory.

"NOW comes the story that will make you sure I'm crazy. It begins seventeen years ago, when I was eighteen and in school. In the same town was a girls' school, and between the two schools there were no relations, diplomatic or otherwise. The young ladies took constitutionals, morning and afternoon, in a double line and under heavy guard, and we were only mildly interested in them.

"One day while I was standing on the main street waiting for my companions, the procession came along, and something happened which caused the long line to stop directly in front of me. I saw one of the girls, and one only—in my eyes she was an exquisite creature. She saw me, and for a moment she looked at me with her big brown eyes as though I were a strange and curious animal. Then, realizing no doubt that she was staring at me in a most unladylike manner, she dropped her eyes, blushed a little and turned away.

"That was in the winter. I did my best to see her again, and once or twice I did see her in the far distance, but my hours and her guard prevented anything more. It was utterly impossible for me to approach her in any conventional way—you can readily understand that a boy of eighteen would have difficulty in explaining to any one that he wanted to meet a girl of fifteen whom he had seen once for a moment and whose name he did not know. No boy could do that, even if it were otherwise possible to meet her, which it wasn't.

"But I didn't forget her; the desire to see her and talk with her grew and grew, until when the spring was well along I was willing to sacrifice anything, life included, no doubt, to accomplish my desire. I was overwhelmed by love at first sight of the puppiest variety. I managed to get away, and circled about her school in the vain hope of seeing her—vain because of general probabilities and an eight-foot stone wall that surrounded the entire domain. My failure only made me more determined, and late in May the hunch came, and it was definite down to the finest detail, including the hour.

"It was a most unfortunate hour—I was under guard then myself and danger surrounded me on all four sides and on top. But love knows no danger nor locks nor teachers, nor any of those mundane things. I got away, and I did not care one iota what happened to me when I returned; I had to go if the heavens fell, and I had a feeling that nothing was going to happen when I returned.

"I flew across country directly to the spot that I knew was the right one. There were cracks in the wall, as I knew there would be, and I went up to the top of the eight-foot barrier without difficulty, and pretty well concealed. The girl was sitting on a bench, reading, directly below me. She heard me and looked up.

"Go ahead and laugh your fool head off if you want to, you old rascal. If you know anything about thought transference or mental telepathy or psychic stuff, you may deliver a lecture on it, or on mathematical probabilities if you prefer. I don't know anything about the former, and the latter has nothing to do with it—it was just another hunch that produced the goods.

"I'm not going to bore you to death with the details of the half-hour I spent with my fifteen-year-old goddess. She told me I mustn't come in, or down, so I did. She was nervous, but glad to see me; and as for me, I was in the seventh—or seventeenth—heaven. She was fairly tall, medium dark, not thin, even more innocent than I, and to my youth the most beautiful creature in the world.

I imagine our conversation was stilted and commonplace. I don't remember anything about it except that it was very wrong for her to be there with me, just as wrong as it was for me to have come, and it must never happen again. It took some arguing to persuade her to see me at the same time three days later, but finally she agreed to do it if fate were kind.

"I WENT back to my school and, miracle of miracles, my absence had not been noticed. On the third day, with everything against me, I made a clean getaway, and found my friend waiting for me. No one, man or youth, had ever loved as I loved her. This time we spent an hour together, an hour beyond description. She loved me just as I loved her, though of course neither of us said a word about it. There is no question whatever but that she was as wholesome, substantial and sweet a girl as there was in the world. She would not tell me her name, why I never quite understood, nor did she ask mine. She was quiet and modest, she was not chatty, but rather low-voiced and a little slow of speech. She promised to see me again, Providence willing, on the fourth day following. We shook hands when we said good-by that second time, and there was a real romance in the making in our hearts.

"I found when I reached my school that a friendly fire had broken out in the laundry, and that I might have stayed away another hour in perfect safety. On the fourth day following, my aunts arrived unexpectedly, and I have never seen my friend since. The moment I saw my lady aunts approaching I had another hunch; to wit, that never again should I scale the garden wall. I didn't. I spent two days in abject misery, and when I again had some freedom of action it was too late: the young ladies' seminary had closed and every bird in it flown.

"I went away and in the fall I went to college, and as I thought, got over my infatuation. I was even reasonable enough to appreciate that said infatuation was no more than a momentary condition, and a matter of extreme youth and lack of experience. If it had any influence on my college life, it was that I had no great interest in girls—at any rate that condition was not a pose, it was an honest lack of enthusiasm. I saw lots of girls, I went to dances and all that sort of thing, but I was more bored than anything else, and I stayed that way till I was twenty-five.

"Then suddenly I went girl-crazy—that was ten years ago—and I've stayed that way ever since, with the modifications that I've told you about. I've tried to hide it; I've tried not to be known as a ladies' man.

"I've been looking for my woman high and low, and I haven't found her; and the reason that I haven't found her is that I haven't found the girl who was on the other side of the garden wall. I've known for every minute of the last ten years that I haven't really been looking simply for a woman of certain qualifications, an indefinite woman of a definite type, but that I've been looking for the specific woman who, when I knew her, was a fifteen-year-old girl. Laugh away, but I'm going to find her sure as fate, see if I don't."

I did laugh. "You're as crazy as a loon, Paul," I said. "You don't think it possible, do you, that your beautiful child has been faithful to the memory of a wild boy for seventeen long, weary years? Why, man alive, she's happily married and has eight children and hasn't thought of you for seventeen years less a week or two."

"No," Paul said. "She's not married."

"How do you know?" I demanded.

He shrugged his shoulders. "How do I know anything? It's the hunch."

"Why don't you try tracing her? Give your hunch the benefit of a little methodical research, instead of trusting to blind luck. The girl may live in California, and never leave the state as long as she lives."

"I've been to California and she wasn't there," Paul said with a smile. "How would you advise tracing her?"

"THAT was a large question, but I made the obvious answer.

"Get a list of the girls who were in the school that year and follow each one to her lair," I said.

"I did," he said casually. "It was quite simple—there were only three hundred and eighty of them. I wrote three hundred and eighty letters and I promise you it was quite a job. I received two hundred and ten answers, and not one of the writers had any of the facts of the case, but were interested in knowing them—a pretty commentary on the young ladies of the land, I think. Seventy letters came back unclaimed, leaving an even hundred unaccounted for in any way. I take it for granted my friend was among the seventy. That was ten years after the incident of the eight-foot stone wall. I had a minor hunch that chance was a better friend of mine than method or further sleuthing, and there you are."

"And you're still nursing the fond hope that the lady is going to turn up!" I exclaimed. "Paul, you are optimism personified."

He smiled at me. "Not only am I nursing the hope, but I have never been so confident as I am at this moment—there's excitement in the air, I'm nervous, the hunch is in my bones—I know something is going to happen, just as a barometer foresees a storm or rheumatism foretells wet weather. I'm nervous, expectant for no apparent reason, and it's been growing, getting worse, for a month. There are going to be a lot of women at the Deans' to-night—I can hardly wait to get there. I'm going to find her—whoever

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she may be—if not to-night, then soon."

"In the meantime you'd better see a nerve specialist," I said cruelly. "If I didn't know you, I'd say you were a nut. As it is, I'm worried," and I tapped my head with my finger.

"I didn't expect you to treat all this seriously," Paul said. "I told you it was a wild, crazy yarn, and you know nothing about hunches; they have to be born in you; you can't acquire them. Let's go, it's time."

We went, and on the way I gave him some sound advice.

"Forget all this tommy-rot and be sane," I said. "Look at things calmly and with some little atom of reason. The odds are a thousand to one——"

"I'll take that," Paul interrupted, "as much of it as you like, the short end of it."

"It was a manner of speaking," I said. "The odds are nevertheless a thousand to one that you'll never see the girl again, and a hundred to one that if you do you'll find she is married, or doesn't care a snap of her finger for you—or that you don't for her. You'll be terribly disappointed."

"All right, name the stakes," Paul said a little wearily. "I'll take anything that suits you."

"Be sensible!" I exclaimed. "For instance, there's a girl going to be at the Deans' to-night who would suit you to a tee, if you can get her. She's tall and strong and healthy, highly bred, intelligent, good to look at—that's the description, isn't it?—straight as a string and pleasant as the day is long. She's had more suitors than any girl I know and has no use for any of them; she's thirty-two or -three, and exactly the woman for you. Of course she may be your old girl—if she is, that's the end of it; but even if she isn't, have a look at her and if she pleases your eye investigate further, forget that fool hunch of yours and accomplish something worth while."

"All right, I will; I'll do my best to please you. What's her name?"

"Amy Godley," I said.

"Noted," said Paul, and then, as though he seemed to realize how utterly absurd he was, he threw back his head and laughed, and almost ran us off the road doing it.

WE REACHED the Deans', and half an hour later I saw Amy. Paul was near me, and I separated him from the people with whom he was talking and indicated Amy to him. His hand happened to be on my arm.

"There's Amy Godley," I said.

"Nice-looking girl, very," Paul said.

"She's more than that," I insisted.

"Of course, but she's not the girl;" and I could tell by Paul's voice and manner that he didn't care whether he met her or not.

"How about it?" I asked. "Do you want to go over?"

He did not answer, and I looked at him, and as I did so I felt his fingers grip my arm hard. His eyes were fixed on a group across the big room, people who had just come in.

"Do you see that woman in gray, on the right, talking with Mary Ladd?" Paul's voice was almost a hiss.

"Yes," I said. "What about her?"

"Do you know her?"

"No, I've never seen her before."

Then Paul, who, I realized, had been swayed by some strong emotion, laughed.

"I'll bet you a hundred to one she's not married; a thousand dollars to ten dollars," he said.

"You're on," I said. "Naturally you don't know whether she is married or not—you're not betting on a sure thing?" That was a joke—not an insult.

"I don't even know her name," Paul said. "Go and find out; meet her. If she's married come and get your thousand. If she's not, bring her by hook or crook to Norman's den, at the end of the hall—nobody's in it. Do it as quickly as you can, and don't spend the thousand before it's hatched." He turned and went off in the direction of the den.

IT WAS easy enough for me to meet the woman in gray, who turned out to be a Miss Kemble—the "Miss" part lending wings to ten dollars of mine. I walked across and spoke to Mrs. Ladd and the thing was done, but it was a very different matter to lead her to an out-of-the-way room the moment I'd met her.

However, I had an inspiration—it came with the sound of the music that burst forth at that moment. "I'm sorry I can't dance," I lied to Miss Kemble, though it wasn't much of a lie at that. "Won't you sit this out with me?" The lady signified by a smile her willingness to do that, and we went out of the ballroom.

"Have you seen the Deans' goldfish?" I asked. Goldfish seemed as plausible as anything. I actually had a dim recollection that there were two or three small ones in a globe in Norman's room. The lady hadn't seen the goldfish—and to ease her mind I said, "Molly—that is, my wife, Mrs. Hicks—thinks they're very remarkable. They're down here."

Miss Kemble followed me innocently and we came to the door of Norman's den.

"Hello, Paul, you here?" I said. "I've brought Miss Kemble to see the goldfish."

Paul was standing facing the door, and when he saw the woman beside me a smile came on his lips. I heard the woman catch her breath quickly, and I looked at her. Her eyes were on Paul's, and opened wide. They had amazement in them. She trembled; she had all the appearance of a woman who sees a ghost. Then Paul spoke.

"You've come at last," he said. "I've been waiting a long time—for you."

THE woman gave a little cry, I think of fear, and she turned to me as though for protection; but she changed her mind quickly and turned back to Paul and stared at him again, breathing fast and her hands clenched tight. She seemed afraid and yet fascinated by him, hypnotized; certainly she was in the grip of such strong feeling that she was powerless to move. Then she laughed, and an expression the like of which for wild, delirious happiness I had never seen before, came on her face, and I saw Paul coming toward her and I saw her waiting for him.

I had a feeling that it was time for me to go, that I wasn't needed any more, and I took my departure, closing the door behind me very quietly. I am under the impression that I tiptoed down the hall—I'm not quite sure what I did or thought, except that I went straight to Mary Ladd.

"What did you do with your girl?" she asked.

"I don't know," I said, "but—but she's all right. She's perfectly happy. She's a friend of yours, isn't she? Nice girl, I suppose?"

"Margaret Kemble a nice girl!" Mary exclaimed, as though I should know my question was absurd. "She's the salt of the earth."

"Where she live?" I asked in a mumbling fashion.

"New York. Sam Hicks, what *is* the matter with you?"

"Matter with me? There's nothing the matter with me—but—I guess if you'd seen what I've just seen you'd—you'd—well—you'd——"

"Sam Hicks, you've been drinking!" Mary was furious with me, and it brought some sense back to me.

"Not a drop, as you very well know," I said grandiloquently. "Just wait till you see your old Salt-of-the-Earth, and if you don't get 'em too, then I'm a—a—a zebra with green stripes."

The rest of that evening is a bit hazy in my mind. All I remember of it definitely is seeing Paul and Miss Over-the-Garden-Wall-Salt-of-the-Earth appear some time later and seeing her go to Mary Ladd, take Mary's arm and lead her off somewhere out of sight, and Paul coming to me and saying in a perfectly matter-of-fact way:

"Some god—that little hunch-god of mine—eh, Sammy? Where's the ten you owe me?"

Old Fires

By Hazel Hall

MY THOUGHTS of you are curling clouds of smoke;
Where once they gave me tears and made me choke
To breathe among them, now with head flung high
I watch their vain careering in the sky!

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The Germans shot and shot and shot, but they never checked espionage in Belgium.

The Spy Web

The Story of Secret Service in the Struggle with Germany

By Ferdinand Tuohy

This is the second of a series of articles which unfold a picture of the dramatic underground of the war—the dark play of brain against brain, on royal thrones, in the chancelleries, in the great swarming cities, behind and across the lines and in the far-flung web of conflict—for that thing of supreme value in the struggle, information.

The first article, published last month, was the story of the spies—men and women—rich and poor—high and low—who worked in the cities far from the actual scene of battle. And of the science of spy-catching, spectacular at times, often dull and sordid, ceaselessly practised by the British and French.

The author, after acting as war correspondent for the London *Daily Mail* in Belgium, France, Russia and Poland, 1914 to 1915, and serving in the British army in France from 1915 to 1917, was attached to the General Staff of the British army and proceeded on a tour of inspection to Palestine, Mesopotamia, Saloniki and Italy, thus completing the entire circle of the world war.—The Editors.

II—BEHIND THE LINES

THOSE conducting operations in the field kept in touch with "the fellow opposite" and his every move in two ways, by fair, above-board means and by the employment of spies. Espionage "behind the lines" was fundamentally different from that delicate art as practised in the big centers like Paris and London. A spy in France and Flanders was right in the center of the war; short of being mentally deficient, he or she couldn't help picking up information of military value of some kind or other every hour, every minute of the day.

Supervision, however was much stricter in the war zone, and entrance to it from neutral Holland and Switzerland a matter of great difficulty.

War-zone spies were few and far between on the Allied side of the line, except at Dunkirk and in Lorraine, but behind the German lines espionage carried out by Belgians developed an unheard-of intensity. All their thoroughness availed the Germans little. They shot and shot and shot; bullied and bullied; tried tricks and tricks and tricks and bribed and bribed and bribed—but they never checked espionage in Belgium.

Belgium was divided up by the Allies into so many espionage areas, and in each area a trusted professional resident spy, or else a new-found patriot spy above suspicion, was placed in control. It was for this control agent to run things as he liked in his own area. If he chose to seduce a German soldier by bribery, or to turn his own personal charm to account in persuading a pretty estaminet girl to act the eavesdropper—well, he did so. He created his own risks; his was the task of warding off the consequences.

The French Intelligence agent, stationed at Ghent, knew nothing of the French Intelligence system—nothing whatever—not even who was his neighboring control agent in Brussels. He was allowed, then, to establish his own area network of espionage. Let us watch him at work. He is standoffish to the Germans—may even deliberately seek the lime-light by some transgression or other.

He is well camouflaged as a man following a definite trade or profession. He starts assembling his agents or satellites. The less agents he has, the better. And they must not be acquainted with one another—as agents. He may select five or six in all. A mayor, a commercial traveler, a priest, a police official, a hotel proprietor. Especially a priest. In the choice of these assistants he risks his own life. Are any of them likely to denounce him? He must weigh the matter to the last dram. He has got to tell each one of them, separately, in as many words: "I am a spy." He places his life in their hands.

Now the organization becomes more complex.

Satellite spy No. 1, the mayor, knows who are intelligent and who are to be relied on in the district over which he presides. He in his turn selects a few underlings: an innkeeper, a priest — always a priest—a doctor, a clever woman, a

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railway official, a schoolmaster. He selects them severally, tells each one separately what he wants done. As in the case of the original five spies chosen by the gentleman of Ghent, and of whom the mayor himself was one, these second-line agents are kept in entire ignorance of each other's identity as agents. The only agent each one of them knows is the mayor, plus whatever third-line agents they may themselves risk appointing.

The railway official notes all the traffic in his station; the doctor may light on one or two gossipy patients and encourage them to gossip; the priest may hear a thing or two in the confessional after confession is over; the innkeeper may ask his pretty girl barmaid all she has overheard that night of German officers' conversations; the tradesman may note the regimental number on the shoulder-strap of German soldiers visiting his shop. And so on.

All these satellite spies may be known to the Ghent control agent by numbers or letters of the alphabet, frequently interchanged. But the control agent will never have direct relations with any of them, always working through the original five trusted friends he himself chose. In practise, therefore, each agent knows only one agent above him and such satellite agents as he himself appoints.

Naturally the Germans had, more or less, every one in Belgium under varying degrees of observation: acute, periodical, casual. They had hordes of informers, corrupted Belgians, and a deep-rooted and far-flung system of surveillance. Incessantly reports came to hand that such and such a person was a spy. The Germans watched the suspect. They watched a company of Belgian suspects once for three whole months, and allowed them meanwhile to carry on their espionage and damage the German cause. But in the end, by patient watching, they got at the whole system, and made a clean sweep of its adherents. Had they arrested their original suspect straightway, no such "bag" could have resulted.

Under the Tyrant's Eye

FROM the network of this system dozens of reports streamed in each week from brave and devoted Belgian patriots, working with the eye of the tyrant perpetually upon them. Due tribute has never been paid to Belgium for this, not the least valuable part she played in the war. Nor is enough known of heroic individuals, like the Prince and Princess of Croy, whose château near Mons was only one of many rallying centers where fugitives from German barbarity were sheltered regardless of consequences.

The Croys initiated the system which was ultimately to send the hapless Miss Cavell to her doom. Right at the commencement of the war the Princess went to Brussels, disguised as a peasant woman, and saw Edith Cavell, an old friend. To her she outlined her plan: The château at Mons was to be the rallying center for all Allied fugitives, both wounded and unwounded. The peasants would lead the fugitives there by night, and the signal would be sand thrown at a certain window.

The Princess proposed to establish "forwarding agents" along the line of route to the Dutch frontier, whose duty it would be to give food and shelter to the fugitives as they arrived, attended by duly accredited guides. Would Miss Cavell act as one of three such forwarding agents in Brussels? The Englishwoman readily agreed. She had, she said, already been sheltering English fugitives of her own accord. Miss Cavell was to keep the men in Brussels till they could safely be got away to the frontier. On being reminded that the Germans had threatened to shoot any one caught harboring Allied soldiers, Miss Cavell replied: "We must take the risk. We are doing no harm; only helping our own people. A German woman would do the same."

Miss Cavell was then given further instructions: "Don't have anything to do with men arriving here who are not in the company of one or other of our guides. Our guides will simply give the day of the week as the code word. Here are their assumed names. There will only be six altogether, three working between Mons and Brussels, and three more between Brussels and the Dutch frontier. The latter are poachers and smugglers, well accustomed to slipping into Holland. They will all be under 'Bourg.'"

After the system had been working some time the Germans got much stricter, and only parties of two or three could be got through to Brussels, and these had to have false identification papers prepared. The Princess took the men's photographs, while the Prince forged the signatures and stamps.

Edith Cavell Trapped

MISS CAVELL herself used to take the men to the rendezvous in Brussels, whence they were to try and reach the frontier. She warded off suspicion by sending her fugitives out into the crowded streets by day if they were French or Belgian, and by giving them work as orderlies in her hospital if they were English and tonguetied. So that whenever the Germans called they found everything in order. Many fugitives, unfortunately, were caught, and when in civilian clothes, or even if still in uniform, were shot out of hand.

All through the spring and summer of 1915 the process of smuggling the fugitives into Holland continued. Miss Cavell went on with her own work all the time, nursing Germans, French and Belgians. She never made a slip from beginning to end. She was ultimately given away by one or two of the men she had smuggled out of the country writing to thank her. The Germans intercepted these letters. This was just before the battle of Loos, and the Germans at once "saw red." They themselves had managed to introduce a number of spies into England in the guise of Belgian refugees during the wild exodus from Antwerp and Ostend the year before. Surely Miss Cavell was passing spies across the Dutch frontier in addition to fugitive soldiers?

In their clumsy way, they sought to entrap the Englishwoman by sending to her house two agents who posed as fugitives from the Mons château. Miss Cavell, not seeing a recognized guide, simply answered that she could not take them in—nothing more. The Germans had hoped in this way to get in touch with the other links in the chain, as Miss Cavell passed the bogus fugitives on, and so possibly get to the bottom of a general espionage conspiracy. They already held sufficient proof to arrest Miss Cavell on the lesser charge—punishable by them, however, with the same penalty as the greater.

Events now moved rapidly. "Bourg" was the first to be arrested. Miss Cavell warned the Prince, and it was decided that he should disappear to clear the air. The Prince, however, would never have gone had he known of the wholesale arrests that were to follow. In effect, a week later the Germans arrested thirty persons, including the Princess and Miss Cavell. Few were allowed a lawyer. In order to extract information from the prisoners, none of whom would answer any questions, the Germans introduced agents masquerading as fellow-prisoners into the cells. These bogus prisoners, acting on definite instructions, succeeded in drawing out several of the real prisoners and making them talk, as evidence at the "trial" afterward showed.

"Bourg" on being sentenced sent for his wife, and told her he had got fifteen years in a fortress, discussed plans with her, made arrangements for what she and the children were to do, said good-by and then wrote a letter to be given her after his death. He refused to be blindfolded, saying he would let no German touch him and that he would not be blindfolded to be shot by swine.

Let us now consider the measures taken by a *contre-espionage* organization in the field to check the activities of such a secret circle. Let us suppose our area of surveillance to be the British zone in France and Flanders—seething with an abnormal population due to the presence of many hundred thousand refugees, Flemish, French and Belgian. It was necessary to keep a continuous and strict surveillance upon all these refugees, and also on the three or four million regular inhabitants of the war zone. One zone would be accordingly divided up into four main areas. A main area, in turn, was composed of about twenty police stations, such a police station being responsible for fifty square miles. A police station in turn was split up into eight or ten communes. So that the British zone, for anti-spy work, was de-centralized into no less than eight hundred communes, each commune covering an area of, roughly, five miles.

The British System

THE advantage of this system—a repetition of the water-tight compartments in the big cities—needs no emphasis. Each little commune, of perhaps three thousand people, was watched by Intelligence police having under them civilian "indicators" with a local knowledge of the inhabitants of that commune. An "indicator" would usually be the mayor or the parish priest, and was in no sense a spy upon his own people. He merely placed his superior knowledge at the disposal of the British authorities. The delicate task British police, foreigners, had in surveilling French civilians in their own country will not be lost sight of.

Each main area was, further, divided up into three zones drawn parallel to the battle-line: The forward zone, the middle zone, and the back zone. Precautions against espionage were naturally strictest in the forward zone nearest the battle-line, the very fact of so many thousands of civilians continuing to live close up to the line, with death daily all around them,

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alone calling for suspicion. I remember once finding a village near Arras, Bretencourt, full of men, women and children, although it lay only seven hundred yards from the line. In Arras, Bethune and Armentières, hundreds of civilians continued to live on in cellars when these places were being shelled to pieces and their streets rendered an inferno of gas and high explosive. All these people had to be watched, and naturally many spy scares arose from time to time, usually as the result of a town such as Dunkirk or Albert being heavily and accurately shelled by the Germans.

Then, again, there would be the *alerte*, caused by a woman seeking information of military value—in nine cases out of ten actuated by nothing more than the natural curiosity of her sex. Once a scare arose in the Ypres area over a woman described in the daily black list as:

> Aged about 30; fat, with dropsical eyes and answers to the name of Gaby. Has chocolate birthmark in small of back.

The search for this lady, in view of her peculiarities of marking, was carried out with some difficulty.

Women Closely Watched

ANOTHER and more famous heroine was Tina of Armentières, a comely little lady who served crumpets amid "crumps", and became a mascot in the Second Army. Tina had the most amazing collection of regimental badges collected as souvenirs—at one time or another, it is said, she had smiled on a representative of every unit in the B. E. F. She was discreetly removed from Armentières on the eve of the battle of Messines when, it was said, she knew more of the organization of the British army than the War Office and G. H. Q. rolled into one.

And there were other *vivandières* upon whom a close watch had to be kept in view of their associations: Gaby of "five o'clock" in the Rue des Trois Gailloux, Amiens, capable of putting and keeping a brace of skittish brigadiers in their places. Mam'zelle "Jamais" of Lillers, so called because cruel rumor had it that she'd never been known to refuse a kiss across the counter. And dimpled Zozo of Abeele; and Josephine of the little oyster-shop at Amiens, who by her wit and smiles cajoled enough *pourboires* during the battle of the Somme to bring her old parents up from the Midi and poverty, and re-establish them in a prim little Picardy cottage.

The true "map reference," as these modern *vivandières* have been christened, did not flourish by the wayside. It is doubtful if any other land but France could have produced her. Simple peasant girls, carried forward by the whirlwind of war into a world unknown, enthroned without beauty or wit, and simply because of environment. Such *vivandières*, were they so inclined, had ample opportunity of acting the eavesdropper spy. They never lacked officer admirers only too anxious to open a bottle of champagne and—talk.

Besides keeping a constant vigil—which took concrete shape in the filing of a vast quantity of personal reports—a *contre-espionage* organization in the field was responsible for the censorship of all civilian correspondence in the war zone, and for the issue and control of all passes. It became imperative to check all railway and motor-car arrivals from outside the zone of the armies, since they might contain German collecting agents.

An especial danger existed here in the repatriation of tens of thousands of French civilians by the Germans. These refugees traveled round from Belgium to their homes in Northern France, via Switzerland, and, realizing how easy it would be for the enemy to include numbers of agents among these repatriated people, the British General staff posted Intelligence officers at Lausanne, where every repatriated civilian was obliged to give full personal particulars and undergo a personal examination.

This examination served a double purpose, since frequently refugees were able to give exceptionally valuable information as to conditions behind the German lines. Sometimes refugees would be called in to tell "Intelligence" all about their native villages, lying just ahead in the zone of the next planned attack; what strong points the enemy would be likely to organize in these hamlets when the British thrust forward, and so on.

Very few spies were caught behind the British lines for the good reason that few ever operated there, the surveillance of each water-tight commune, of the correspondence of the inhabitants and of their comings and goings, being complete. The system necessitated a vast deal of paper work, the accumulation of tens of thousands of personal *dossiers*, the futile watching of hundreds of suspects, the issue of endless "black lists" of doubtful characters—but the game was worth the candle.

The wounded man made a sudden bolt for the German lines. Quick as lightning, the Russian pulled out a revolver and shot the fugitive in the back.

The Masquerading Spies

EXCEPT in the big towns like Amiens, St. Omer and Boulogne there was little peril of an enemy remaining for long undetected. In Amiens such haunts as Charley's Bar and the Hôtel du Rhin were happy hunting-grounds for the eavesdropper. Possibly Dunkirk, however, was even a more fertile ground for the spy. Several Belgian soldiers were shot as spies in German pay during the progress of the war, and the possible danger from this quarter was always a source of anxiety to the British. It used freely to be suspected that if any German agents were operating behind the British lines, then they were masquerading in Belgian uniform—or were actually Belgian soldiers.

The chance of spies masquerading in British uniform was more remote, since sooner or later such an individual would be bound to meet some one of the regiment, possibly even battalion, he himself purported to belong to—when the spy's entire ignorance of that unit would at once become apparent in conversation, and suspicion automatically settle upon him.

One recalls, however, a case of this description from the Bzura front. One day a wounded Russian came stumbling over the snow through the Mohilev woods before Warsaw. His mouth was heavily bandaged, and when asked where he was making for, he couldn't answer, just pointed ahead and stumbled on. Those who met him in this way naturally directed him to the nearest ambulance column. But the wounded man, somehow, never continued long in the direction indicated, preferring

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She made hosts of friends and some very close friends indeed, young, susceptible and loquacious officers.

apparently to roam aimlessly in and out of the woods, now skirting Russian battery positions, now making his way painfully round battle headquarters, dumps, etc.

The wanderer may have spent several days thus when, unfortunately for him, he happened to stumble past a Russian officer who, the day before, had directed him to the nearest field dressing-station. Seeing the self-same wounded man wandering about, his mouth still bandaged, the officer's attention was now at once aroused. He accosted the vagrant and peremptorily ordered him to follow him to the nearest medical-aid post. On the way the wounded man made a sudden bolt for it towards the German lines. Quick as lightning, the Russian pulled out a revolver and shot the fugitive in the back.

Later, in a hospital, while the victim lay dying, they removed the bandages from his mouth. It was whole and unhurt. The man was a German officer, couldn't talk Russian, and so had gagged himself into a silence which could be accounted for.

Behind the Scenes in Poland

BEFORE recrossing Europe, we may well linger a moment at the Hotel Bristol, Warsaw, since no narrative of this nature would be complete without mention of it. In 1914-1915 life in Warsaw converged on the Hotel Bristol—you might have termed it the hub of the whole Russian army. From its Machiavellian hall porter (afterward shot by the Germans as a spy) to its imperious, neurotic princess, the Bristol was a real "Grand Babylon."

You might not drink champagne in public, but you could give an extraordinarily life-like imitation in a private salon. You might not be permitted to dance, but there was some remarkable dancing to be had privately up-stairs. All night long the "excess-fiends" would carry on to music. And next day, the participants in these Bacchanalian revelries would be punctiliously bowing and scraping and hand-kissing in the public lounge as if no kiss had ever strayed elsewhere!

The same people always stayed at the Bristol, the wives and daughters of senior officers, the military attachés and a few correspondents, a selection of war-brides and chaperoned fiancées, a dozen or so of imperious and entrancing courtesans, demanding and securing the self-same gallantry and subservience as were they virtuous noblewomen; spies and counter-spies of both sexes, scions, effeminate enough at times, of the local houses of Potocki and Radziwill, Lubirmirski and Czartoryski; statesmen and distinguished visitors to the front, white-robed *sistras* of high degree; finally, an incessant flow of Russian officers, young and old, boyish and bearded, all kissing each other on either cheek, Cossacks, Ukranians, Muscovites, Siberians—a "forbidden fruit" atmosphere dominating all and everything in this hectic hotel.

The Bristol, in short, was an admirable center for espionage—the typical war hotel, situated close up to the line, where the campaign was eternally under discussion in its myriad aspects, and where discreet rendezvous between agent and agent would pass unnoticed in the general bustle and hum of life—well, in this Hotel Bristol resided a brilliant and pretty "Polish" girl, when she was not working in a Red Cross train out at Bolimov.

This girl was everybody's favorite. She made hosts of friends, and some very close friends indeed, young, susceptible and loquacious Russian officers just in from the line and hypnotized by the prospect of a love-affair after all they had gone through. Sister would bestow her attentions on one such whom she saw was bright and well versed in passing events, and proceed discreetly, along these lines:

"Yes, it is true. I love you . . . I don't want to go back. . . . You must tell me exactly where you are, where you sleep, fight, live, so that when I think of you I shall imagine I am actually with you!"

Whereupon, in the privacy of her apartment, Sister would produce a large scale map and get her admirer to mark on it full particulars of his life in the line—where he was billeted and much more information besides. There was even evidence that when Sister wanted artillery information, she would transfer her elastic affections temporarily to a gunner and get him to mark in a few Russian battery positions.

But all good times come to an end.

One day Sister attempted a *tour de force* with dire results. She actually persuaded one of her adorers to give himself up to the Germans, bearing her reports, next time he was due to go out on night patrol in "no man's land." Happily her victim "ratted" at the last moment and made a clean breast of it to his seniors, with the sequel that Sister was arrested, tried and shot by a body of those very moujiks she had betrayed with one arm while tending them with the other.

Treason in High Places

BEHIND the lines in France, where hundreds of staff officers worked in houses and châteaux inhabited by civilians, there was always a likelihood of secret documents being removed or copied by unseen hands. One recalls an alarm in this respect in which a famous general was the central figure. A change of headquarters was being made, and on the morning of departure staff officers were assembling their commander's files, papers, etc., when to their horror they found that quite half a dozen files were missing. Every corner of the château was searched without avail, till some one suggested taking up the carpet in the general's room. The files were found beneath, carefully laid out side by side. The general had always a detestation for what he termed "a paper war" and had himself placed them there. He admitted the fact laughingly. Shortly after, he took a long rest.

Nevertheless there existed a live peril in these châteaux in the war zone, veritable nests of military secrets. At La Lovie Château near Poperinghe, which continued for four years to serve as army or corps headquarters, a vast Flemish family and a large number of servants lived cheek by jowl with the staff. In 1915, one member of the household was a young Dutch tutor, always applying for leave to write letters to the *Times* and always as steadily being refused permission

(*Continued on page 83*)

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The Colyumists' Confessional

VII. C. M. Jackson, *by Himself*

I BECAME a columnist in self-defense.

On the Pacific Coast, many city editors, like certain varieties of fruit, are picked before they are quite ripe. Naturally they look askance at anything suggestive of mellowness, *embonpoint* or other indications of maturity. I say this without bitterness, and will add that if the youth who bore 'mid snow and ice the banner with the strange device had been a city editor from this realm of perpetual climate, the chances are strong that the banner aforesaid would have been inscribed not "Excelsior," but "Adolescence."

If an applicant for a situation is thoughtless enough to permit himself to look anyways ancient, he is either politely bowed out of the presence or led to the copy-desk. In the latter event, there, like the happy dagger of Juliet, he rusts and is forgotten. Having chased the Star of Empire to the water's edge, and being unable to swim for any considerable distance, I appeared to one of these gentlemen with the usual request. Although I do not look as old as I feel and do not feel as old as I look, he had his suspicions. But after thinking the matter over for the regulation number of days and nights, during which time I kept myself on a strict diet, he unbent himself, guided me to the copy-desk and introduced me as a person "who might do." And I did. For many, many weary months I did more work than I had ever supposed myself capable of.

To say that I pined for something more diversified would be mildly expressing it. I yearned, I "honed." I even caught myself praying.

Relief came when a special writer of jingles, near-poetry and real poetry left us for wider fields. I was asked to take his place. Once more I did. I took it, without increase of compensation, and wrote my column between stunts of copy-reading. Another paper reached for me and got me. Then the other paper did some reaching and I submitted to recapture. Here I am.

THE great Gamaliels of humor at whose feet I sit, have to write to please populations living in vast areas, people with varied tastes. I talk to only about half a million. Hence my column has more or less of a local flavor. I can spring something like this:

"Oakland man dies while waiting for a telephone call. Isn't the service rotten?" and almost every one gets a "kick" out of it. Of course I could write for a larger crowd and some day I hope to.

(Now I wonder if any publisher will take that hint?)

Every one familiar with the Coast knows of the rivalry for metropolitan and other honors between San Francisco and Los Angeles. It has been going on for years and bids fair to give Tennyson's "Brook" a close run for forever honors. Neither side neglects an opportunity. Hence I should say my best stunt for the year—and I base my judgment on the number of letters and press clippings received, as well as personal comment—was an open communication to the Secretary of the Navy, advising him as to the best methods of bringing the Pacific fleet into Los Angeles harbor. Los Angeles is ten miles from tidewater, but connected herself therewith by annexing a strip of land extending from the city limits to the beach, that long and I don't know how many yards wide, but it is several. This letter follows:

C. M. Jackson, of the San Francisco Bulletin.

Hon. Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR JOSEPHUS: I see by the papers you contemplate reviewing the Pacific fleet in Los Angeles harbor and grab my pen to wise you up to a few things that may help make the occasion a success.

I assume, my dear Josephus, that you are not entirely familiar with this harbor, and in order that you may pull off this imposing spectacle with as much *éclat* as possible, submit the following:

As the fleet heads in, the course of the flagship should be N-NW to the clump of oaks on Milliken's north forty; thence due east along the worm fence to a grove of eucalyptus just above the Miller place. Close formation should be observed so as not to destroy a patch of sweet corn, now well on in the ear, on the Bass Evans farm.

Bass went into the sweet-corn business only recently, and, as he has only one year more in which to pay off the mortgage, I should dislike to see him meet disaster. Besides, Bass is from your state, has a large family, four by his first wife and seven by his second.

Having reached the grove, all helms should be put hard aport and the course changed to NW by N until the bow of the leading ship is abreast of Hank Potter's hay baler, when it should be changed to starboard and continued until about a quarter to four bells, which ought to bring you to Dan Jerrue's place.

You may find the going a bit rough, owing to a condition created by a deluge of gravel that came down from the mountains a couple of thousand years before the Los Angeles river yielded to popular sentiment and went dry, and I would, if I were you, send word ahead to have it graded and rolled.

Having passed what the Los Angelans delight to call the "Straits," the fleet can break from column and by keeping close to the wind with sails close hauled will be able to proceed through the main channel, with the pigeon farm to starboard and the milk cannery to larboard, to a point on the sand flats where the reviewing stand undoubtedly will be located. Following the ceremony, the ships can back out the way they came in.

Use your own judgment about climbing the bank after leaving San Pedro. You can tell Rodman, however, that my experience has been that the best going is right west of Hi Morgan's cooper shop. You can not miss it, for Hi always has a big sign out.

WHILE the Pacific Coast states cover a territory that is many miles from one end to the other and quite a distance across, it is my judgment that people are more neighborly. Some Los Angelans—and they are by no means inconsiderable in number—are as well known in Portland and Seattle as they are at home and *vice versa*. This condition applies to San Francisco and other towns. Hence what occurs in any of these cities is almost local news in the others. That is why the subjoined parody made a hit everywhere from the Mexican border to the Canadian line—and I hope the readers of EVERYBODY'S will not think I am boasting in that statement, because I had letters from nearly every locality commending it.

The Pacific Union Club of San Francisco, the most staid and sedate organization of its kind anywhere, fired a member for attempting to kiss a good-looking chambermaid, who has since sued him for fifty thousand dollars. The day following his dismissal I unraveled the following:

Once upon an evening snappy, full of jazz and very happy,
Sitting in my peaceful home club, quiet-like hard by the door;
Not a thought of coming sorrow, no forebodings for the morrow,
No desire to trouble borrow from Old Grief's stupendous store,
Lounging in an arm-chair cozy, now awake, now feeling dozy,
Lounging there, and nothing more.

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Ah, 'tis easy recalled, very, it was in mild February,
And the sun's bright rays were dancing through the windows on the floor,
When from the long hallway entered one on whom attention centered,
Plump and pretty as a pheasant, with a smiling face and pleasant,
Modest-acting, unafraid, the chic and dimpled chambermaid,
Chic and dimpled, yes and more.

Instantly all sleep was banished, instantly all dozing vanished
As this radiant vision entered through the swinging hallway door,
Instantly my heart stopped beating, then I found my tongue repeating:
"What's this vision so resplendent? She can't be the girl attendant;
No, she's not the girl attendant, she's not been in here before,
Sure, she's not been here before."

"Maid," said I, "or heavenly vision, I'm a man of quick decision,
And your dazzling beauty hits me as I've ne'er been hit before.
Say, oh, rare and radiant being, that my eyes rejoice in seeing,
Will you give me perfect bliss, give to me one tiny kiss
From those bonny crimson lips, where the bees might honey sip,
Just one kiss, and then no more?"

Instantly she flamed with madness where I had expected gladness,
Burst out scolding, scolding, scolding, 'till I'd almost say she swore,
Raised more row in one short minute than I thought could be packed in it,
Pulled my hair and scratched my face as never it was scratched before,
Then she tried to scratch some more.

"Ah!" said I, "you're much too modest," as my arm slipped 'round her bodice,
"Don't behave so awful modest, haven't you been kissed before?"
Still she kept up the disorder, squealed and squawked 'til further orders,
With her nails my face did hector 'til she'd summoned the directors,
Summoned all of the directors, who came rushing through the door,
All the board, and then some more.

Immediate those staid directors organized as my ejectors,
Threw me out in ten short minutes, tossed me out right through the door,
Threw me out to stay forever, told me to come back, no, never;
Fired me with hoots and hissing; clubs, said they, are not for kissing,
Chambermaids are not for kissing; they're just kept to sweep the floor,
Make the beds, and nothing more.

So I'm in a hallroom sitting, 'mid grotesque, weird shadows flitting,
Flitting 'round and cutting capers that I ne'er saw cut before,
And my soul with sorrow laden, dreams of that fair chambermaiden,
Dreams of that fair chambermaiden who had ne'er been kissed before,
And I 'spose those fool directors will now tell her they expect her
To be kissed, No, nevermore.

I break into verse of some sort daily. It is good practise and people seem to like it. At least I haven't been shot at since I started. Sometimes I try to be humorous, sometimes serious, at other times both. The appended sample will convey the idea:

If there's a Heaven when we die,
A home beyond the azure sky,
I hope it's not what preachers say,
Where harpers harp the livelong day.
Nor do I want in that fair clime
To just shout "Glory!" all the time.

No, while I am of music fond,
And hope there's plenty 'cross the pond,
Too much of it would make me tired,
I'd "hone" to have the choir fired.
The thing for me, world without end,
Would be to meet with my old friends.

I'd like to greet all my old girls,
The brown-eyed maids with saucy curls,
To sit and spoon, or maybe sing,
And have straw rides and everything.
And also I would find real joys
In cap'ring round amongst the boys.

There's old folks on that sable shore
I'd love to talk to evermore,
Their voices hear, their faces see,
Ah, that were Paradise to me.
From harps and crowns me e'er defend,
All that I want is my old friends.

AS TO biography, I was born four miles from and grew to early manhood in Factoryville, Pennsylvania, the town made famous by being the birthplace of Christy Mathewson. His maternal grandmother was a distant relative of mine, although the dear old lady never once reproached me with that fact.

My parents were poor and as honest as circumstances would permit. I began earnest, active life by laboring on the section eleven hours daily under the direction of a gifted linguist named Kearney. I wrote for the two county papers for nothing, and lots of folks said I slung a rabid pencil, especially when there were obituaries to be recorded.

I started West quite a while ago and have been coming this way ever since, never stopping more than fifteen or twenty years in the same place. I am grandfather to four and do not care a jigger who knows it. I was well acquainted with the late King Kalakaua and he let me call him "Bill." I know four congressmen and three senators personally, and once interviewed Irvin S. Cobb. We have two canaries and the hen is setting. I rode all the way from Omaha to Chicago in the same private car with Li Hung Chang and we never disagreed on a single proposition. Li, it will be recalled, was one of the greatest statesmen of his time. I like my work and never know one day what I am going to do the next, except on Monday. Tuesday is pay-day.

My pet character is the Potrero Philosopher, a creation of my own, the name "Potrero" applying to a once popular section of the city, now, alas! abandoned to the used-can industry and shipbuilding. This supposititious individual is a free lance who comments on all topics regardless.

Among his more recent sayings are the appended:

Lina Cavalieri writes from Paris that her secret for eternal youth is to sleep every night with her face wrapped in veal cutlets. The Potrero Philosopher, who is celebrated for his masculine pulchritude, says he has achieved similar success by wrapping himself around a mess of pork chops before retiring.

The Potrero Philosopher says his idea of a strong-minded woman is one who goes riding with Friend Husband and does all the driving from the rear seat.

We'll say this for wood alcohol, says the Potrero Philosopher, when a man drowns his troubles in it, they stay drowned.

Because I am not as young as I used to be, I sometimes drop into jingle about other days. Things like this:

Went snoopin' round some yesterday,
Hiked down th' Santa Clara way.
By gum! I'm stuck on this new factor
In farmin' life; I mean th' tractor.
Why, say, when I driv "Buck" an' "Bright,"
When "haw" was left an' "gee" was right,
I walked, while now th' farmer's son
Rides while he's givin' her th' gun,
An' where I'd plow one furrer, cussin',
This feller, singin', turns a dozen.

Some fifty-odd short years ago
I "hilled my 'taters" with a hoe.
I 'tended corn with one ol' mule
Before I went, an' arter school.
We allus used jest scythes fer mowin',
An' done by hand all of our sowin',
With grapevine cradles cut our grain,
An' hauled it in 'twixt showers o' rain.
When winter's snow hid hills an' vales
We threshed it in th' barn with flails.

I uster work all day full steam,
An' 'fore I et I'd feed th' team,
An' foll'rin' that I 'round would chouse
A milkin' of, say, thirteen cows.
But now when clocks say quittin' hour
Th' driver jest shuts off th' power,
Eats supper feelin' fine as silk,
Then sees th' 'lectric milker milk,
Looks at the stock, machin'ry fed,
Then, scarcely tired, goes to bed.

Th' cultivator's run by power,
Th' churnin's done in half an hour;
Where onct th' hired girl might shirk
A big machine th' butter works.
She used to skim by hand th' cream,
But now they "separate" by steam;
Power cuts th' grain, threshes an' sacks
An' piles th' straw all up in stacks;
Why nuthin' in th' hull derned land
Is done no more by men by hand.

And then there are other things like these:

With all the timidity the subject inspires us, we would like to ask the state prohibition enforcer if this plan to use malt sugar, manufactured in an ex-brewery, is in violation of the new dry law.

Flyer Maynard has decided to abandon aviation for the pulpit. He can say anything he wants there without being called down for it.

"She is a cat," the neighbors said
Of Mrs. Henry House;
But she jumped right upon the bed
Each time she saw a mouse.

Paderewski announces that he is going to quit premiering and go back to his piano. We now await with an anxiety that is almost breathless in its intensity a declaration from Gabe d'Annunzio that he will quit Fiuming to return to his poetry.

In the August number H. I. Phillips of the New York* Globe *will appear at this confessional.

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The strange white man had come to them out of the sea, a splendid, yet terrifying sight. The gods had in truth sent him as their destined ruler.

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Pearls or Apples?

By Frank E. Evans

There is a good deal to choose between them, isn't there? This is the strange choice a blue-eyed Yankee sailor finds himself up against in this new and surprising sort of shipwreck story. Frank E. Evans, who, by the way, is a lieutenant-colonel in the Marine Corps as well as an author, is here making his first appearance in EVERYBODY'S

THE typhoon blasts that had scourged the sea into greenish-white fury for a week now blustered with impotent swagger, like a bully sick at heart of a ruthless spree. Where solid combers had catapulted across the decks of the *Sea Bird*, only hatfuls of flying spume kept up spiteful assaults. The glass was normal, the trade clouds stretched across the horizon like skeins of white worsted tossed up from the sea by playful giants, and the *Sea Bird* forged soberly ahead, winning back to the course from which the typhoon had driven her.

With every square foot of the patched canvas drawing full, and the headsails smooth from leech to luff, there was comparative rest for the crew. Patches of fresh red lead glistened along the rails and in the waterways, the broken weather-rail had been mended by the carpenter's gang, and the lee rigging, slackened by the typhoon's bombardment, had been "swifter-ed in" with deep-sea expertness.

Over the lee rail showed land, a patch of shimmering color against the monotony of indigo blue. With glasses one could make out tossing pennants of white where the surf leaped like ghostly serpents at an outpost of coral reef. The skipper's midday "shot at the sun" showed the *Sea Bird* a hundred-odd miles out of her course. The island showed only as an unnamed dot on the chart, one of the insignificant atolls of that part of the Southern Pacific too far off the beaten lanes of sea travel to warrant the dignity of a name.

In the lee of the weather rail forward sat a veteran of the forecastle, cross-legged. At his side was a crude tattooing kit, a half-dozen skewers, discarded from the ship's galley, around which were wrapped tattooing needles, two saucers of red and blue pigment, and a book filled with garish designs. Jerry Martingale, A. B., back against the rail, faced him with his left forearm bared. From time to time the needle artist wiped away the tiny beads of blood on the seaman's arm, and raised his eyes for an inspection of the design from which he was working.

Even forecastles, though their air be heavy with smoke and the odor of wet oilskins and jumpers, have their dreamers. And in the dull light of the oil-lamps set in gimbals, athwart which swing the weird shadows of bunks and sprawling forms, there be sailormen who drink in the fancies of poets from dog-eared and smoke-grimed volumes. Tom Grogan had dreamed, and read the songs of more learned dreamers, in a score of such forecastles since he had run away to sea to heed the call that will not take nay from some for an answer.

"The Bluebird" of Maeterlinck had been the latest book in his scant library, and "The Bluebird" was the inspiration for his newest tattoo design. His conception of the symbol of happiness bore unmistakable resemblance to the compact lines of the sea-gull. For contrast to its solid blue he had placed in its claws a solid globe of red, the gamut of his color supply. A simple enough design, in all truth, to which his recurrence of painstaking scrutiny seemed an over-refinement of caution.

The bluebird's last feathery pinion had been etched with meticulous care on Jerry's arm, now corded and distended from the repeated jabs of the needles. The old salt turned to the red saucer and, with the zeal of an artist fighting for time against an ebbing north light, began on the circle of red. It was a simple task, and was three-quarters completed when the needle-wrapped skewer flew from his hand. The *Sea Bird* had careened heavily to port.

A ripping, crashing tremor ran through her hull. Giant hands seemed to lift her out of the sea. They hurled her back with vicious caprice, and the soul of the *Sea Bird* quivered and moaned as the hidden pinnacle rock bit deep into her body.

THREE fathoms up Jerry Martingale fought his way to the surface. The *Sea Bird* had broken in half. As he wiped the water from his eyes and gulped his lungs full of air, he saw the forward half slide down into the sea like a diver. The vortex of the plunge carried him down again into fearsome depths of whirling green and white. In all the welter of things he could see no other survivor. The after half of the *Sea Bird* still rested on the pinnacle rock, decks almost awash. He raised his voice in a hail and there was no answer. A second time he hailed, and a note of fear trembled through the "*Sea Bird*, there!"

"The old girl broke up like a ripe watermelon," he muttered to himself, "and we slid out of her like so many seeds."

It had been a full eight years since he had left the Lancaster County farm and shipped in Philadelphia before the mast. In all those years he had used the figures of deep-sea English to express his emotions. Now, face to face with the greatest of marine tragedies, the language of the sea had proved inadequate and the simile of the farm came spontaneously to his lips. It is the trivial things of life that color the thoughts and speech of men in times of crises.

The throbbing of his tattooed arm, and the almost subconscious fear that he dared not shape in words, that soon a triangular fin would be slicing the water about the wreckage, galvanized him into action. Only one boat hung at the after davits, and a topsail yard had plunged down on it, and smashed it beyond repair. The staves of the boat breaker lay crumpled in its stern sheets, sinister in its warning that he was robbed of its store of fresh water.

Jerry grunted in laconic flouting of the scurvy trick that Fate had served him, and swam with his spar to the transfixed wreckage. Keen to the possibility of its salvage for the raft that he had already planned to build, he passed a timber hitch about the spar with a loose rope end, and ran an appraising eye over the decks of the *Sea Bird*. His forearm burned from the salt water. He could not forbear a sardonic smile as he recalled old Tom Grogan's regret, voiced that very morning, over his refusal to have his instep adorned with the blue outline of a pig, the ancient token of the Chinese, that was guaranteed in all the Seven Seas to save sailor-folk from drowning.

WITH spars, oars and a hatch-covering he fashioned the bulk of his raft, and lashed two empty casks on either side, plugged to give buoyancy to his craft. He was desperately searching for a boat breaker of fresh water and tinned provisions, when the wreck lurched ominously to port, and settled until its decks were awash with the sea. A second lurch foreshadowed its speedy dissolution, and Jerry, on the high tide of panic, shoved off his raft, and paddled like a madman toward the blur of amethyst and opal, now his only haven.

The dusk of the tropics hovered like a great bird above the crazy patchwork of the raft and then the hush of night dropped over it. Jerry Martingale looked at the domed sky overhead, and grimly wondered whether the golden, lustrous stars would find him there another night. All through the next day the constant trades breathed into the triangle of sail that he had rigged on two oars, and when dusk came again, he thought the far-off din of breakers was the mouthing of a giant shark biding its time alongside.

The hush of night came, and with swollen and cracked lips he, clean of speech in the *Sea Bird's* noisy forecastle, profaned it with raving blasphemies and foul forecastle oaths. Under his feet the spars swayed in their lashings, for the stars seemed like the Golden Sweet apples of his boyhood on the Lancaster County farm, and he wanted them so badly. Once he lunged desperately for a tantalizingly near one with which to quench his hunger and thirst—now raging demons—and sprawled full length on the water-slimed raft. With infinite stealthy effort he crawled back to safety and clung to the mast, shivering with cold and fear, cowed by the phantom shark in the sea alongside and mocked by the orchard above him.

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In the early morning the freshening trades wrinkled the sea above the raft, filled the sail, and then scurried ahead to drive away the mist that hung before the nearing island in rose-colored veils. A friendly current tugged at the raft, and drew it toward a gap in the outlying barrier reef. It drifted through, pitching and yawing like a craft that had not yet found its helm, and the white serpents of spray that stormed the barrier hissed up and fell back, cheated of their prey.

The man on the raft stumbled to his feet, holding one arm to his side as though it were broken, and then let it drop while with the other he searched with groping, blundering fingers for the sail. His eyes were bloodshot and almost closed; his face distorted and brutalized with suffering. He was sure that the giant white shark was leaping through the air at him, tired of its vigil.

The sail tore away from its lashings as his fingers closed on it, so he wrapped his right arm about the mast and shook his disabled one clumsily at the tossing pennants of spray.

He was taunting the phantom shark with a splendid defiance, daring it to combat, but his speech was a jargon of words. Then he realized, in a dim way, that the sail had carried away, and tore off his dripping shirt and wrapped it about the oar that served for a mast; and he cackled in what was meant for triumphant glee. A sea-gull circled about him, dipping and rising, uttering its thin, querulous cries. The raft grated softly on a shingled beach, and hands, unheeded by him, pulled it until it came to rest in the quiet harbor of the island.

While he lay in the cool, dim interior of a grass-thatched hut, babbling in his delirium, kindly natives used their lore of healing to win him back to sanity. They covered his sun-scorched, salt-stung body with pungent, medicinal leaves and herbs. They forced between his teeth an aromatic brew that drove the devils from his brain. Then, when he awoke to saneness, they gave him cooling drafts of coconut water and bits of roasted wild pigeon. One of them, lean and wrinkled with age, brought him clothes of clean, white cotton drill, and the castaway stood on his feet with the assurance of a skipper on his quarterdeck.

OMU, the others called the old fellow, and by their deference it was clear that Omu was a man of parts in the little island. With a gravity that amused the castaway, Omu inspected the garish device tattooed on his arm, and plied him excitedly with questions. To his straightforward answers, the native shook his head in polite disbelief. It was evident that the design of the bluebird and the small red globe held for the patriarch a deep significance unknown to its maker, old Tom Grogan. When Jerry pressed for an answer it came, told with a child-like candor.

Years ago, before Omu had shot his first arrow into the hide of a wild pig, the story had been handed down to him by the elders of the island's council. One day, so the legend ran, a great sea bird of a deep blue had flown three times around the island. In its talons was a great pearl, aye, the size of a young mango, and of a shimmering rose color. Then three more times, flying low in lessening circles, it had winged its way about the inner confines of the harbor before it hovered with beating wings between the beach and the surf-beleaguered reef.

There it had dropped its burden. When the sun sank that evening, the heavens in the west were aglow with banks of rose and pearl and violet, that were mirrored in the still waters of the harbor. From that day pearls almost perfect in sheen and form had been brought up from the spot by the men of the island, but the great pearl of rose color had always eluded their search.

Omu beat the air with pendulous fingers, and his fellows drew closer as his tale drew to its climax. The strange white man had come to them out of the sea, a splendid yet terrifying sight. On his arm, and Omu's fingers caressed it as his soft speech ran on, the gods had placed the mystic sign of the bird of blue and the pearl of rose. One full moon had passed since their chief had died of a strange sickness that had baffled all their knowledge. In his stead he had left his consort, the widowed Papela. But—and the others nodded in sage agreement—the reign of a woman could not endure beyond the space of two full moons.

THE gods had, in sooth, sent him as their destined ruler. None, in all the line whose claims entitled them to consideration by the council of the island's elders, could question this unmistakable message of the gods. They met his half-serious, half-amused protestations with an unshaken courtesy, and when he showed no signs of wavering Omu played the trump-card, that he had held in reserve for just such a contingency.

When Omu and the other elders led him to the bungalow-like hut where the widowed Papela held her simple court, standards far more exacting than the primitive ones of the South Pacific told Jerry Martingale that she was more than comely, and altogether desirable. Her coloring brought to his mind the streets of Seville, and the gleam of a rose beneath a creamy mantilla. Her hair was black as night itself. One purple blossom of bougainvillea stressed its lustrous vividness.

Her eyes, as she lifted them to his startled scrutiny, were brown and tremulous, and the soft white gown, woven from the fiber of the pineapple, seemed a fitting frame for her delicate beauty. Like the others of the island race, there was about her a gentleness that was appealing, a dignity that was perfect in its simplicity. Her speech of greeting and her queries of solicitude for his comfort were spoken with a liquid softness.

From the moment that he had entered at Omu's heels until he had stepped again into the dazzling whiteness of sun and beach, the mind of Jerry Martingale was all in a whirl of indecision. The crafty Omu had brought him there to dazzle him with a vision of undeniable beauty. And there he had again related his crack-brained legend, embellished this time with a heavy hint that in the God-sent stranger had come a mighty chieftain for their people, and for their vicarious ruler a worthy consort. Papela had heard it gravely, and given serene eyes to the embarrassed castaway.

Almost the span of another moon had elapsed since the *Sea Bird* had broken her back on the pinnacle rock, and only by resort to almost transparent subterfuges had Jerry Martingale evaded daily meeting with the widowed Papela. Unversed in the contradictory customs of the tropics, however, he had not realized that in them he had a needed ally. For courtship in the tropics, contrary to common belief, is hedged about with conventions and restrictions that colder countries ride over roughshod.

And Omu and the others of the council were content to leave to the unruffled passage of time, and to the charms of Papela, the working out of their island's destiny. There were times, of course, when Jerry was assailed by doubts of his ability to outlast the determined elders; times when he was sorely tempted to close his eyes to their serene faith in the legend of their fathers, and to accept unreservedly what they so freely offered him. Mollified by food and drink, pleased by unfailing flattery and deference, there was much of allurement in the net spread so openly before him.

There had grown in him a keen repugnance for the old days, filled with the slushing of rigging, the holystoning of decks, the coarse food of the forecastle. The transition from a seafaring life and its scant rewards to the idyllic life of the island had sowed its insidious seed. In the one he had been but an obscure figure; in the other he already ranked as a prince of the blood, moving through the gentle life of the island like a sun-bronzed deity. Then, when his resolution to win back to his own world and his own people seemed surely under-mined, came his first trip with Omu to the pearling-banks.

IN the isolation of his hut that determination steeled, as he wove his fingers over the lustrous skins of pearls, whose possible wealth staggered his imagination. It was then that the song of the sounding surf and the crooning of the winds in the jungle blended into the siren call of distant cities. The pearls whispered to him a seductive tale of their power of sesame.

The cliffs of Guam, where army transports called each month with stores and mail for the lonely garrison of marines, loomed before his eyes as he stared upward at the beams of bamboo and roof of grass fiber. Even in the day, with its brilliant light, the pearls tormented his imagination. Their glistening coats blinded him to the graceful droop of the palm plumes, the emerald shadows of the lagoon, the glory of the jungle's edge where hibiscus and bougainvillea flaunted their beauty.

Alternately torn by the desire that they had fired, and dulled by the lethargic spell of his surroundings, he stood haggard at the parting of the ways.

That night he did not close his eyes until Dawn was shaking out her skirts of delicate and wondrous hues. So far, he knew, the jealous reefs that encircled the island had thrust it out of the traveled routes. No rumors of its pearls could have reached the sharp ears of the traders, or the belt of surf would not have held back that dubious gentry. Through chance alone had the little island been spared the exploitation that would follow—the ravages of trade, gin, the lechery of its purveyors, the inevitable degradation of the gentle population.

They, in their artless hunt for the fabled pearl of rose color, were ignorant of the

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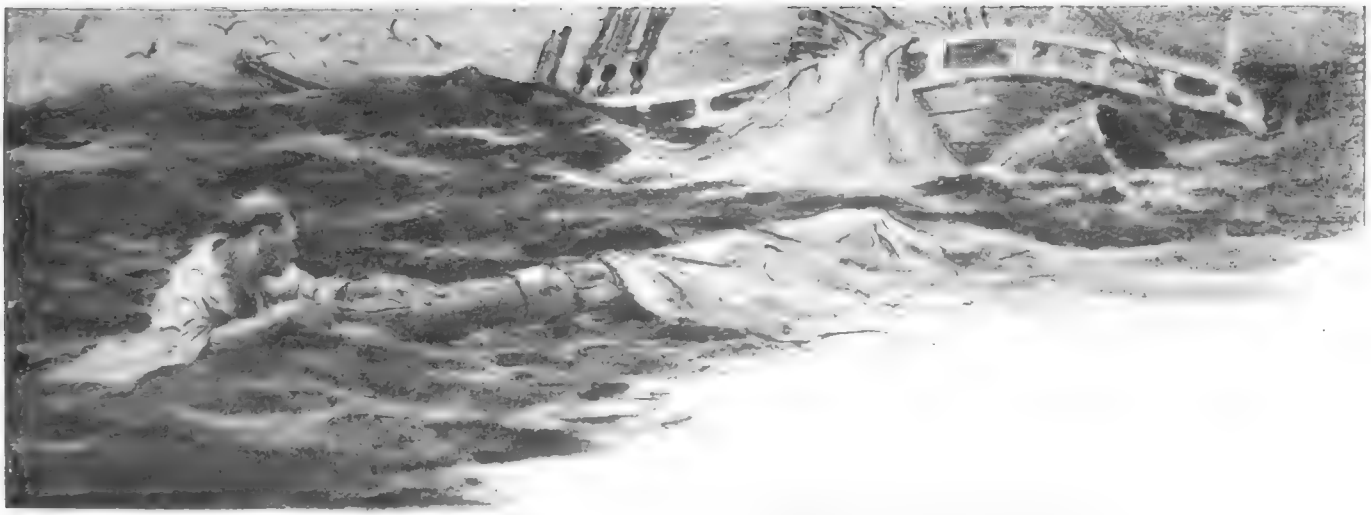

Jerry Martindale fought his way to the surface. As he wiped the water from his eyes, he saw the forward half of the ship slide down into the sea.

worth of the lesser ones that they had salvaged from the harbor's floor. These were to them but pretty baubles to deck about the slim necks of their women; baubles that they would gladly give for the gewgaws of a trader. And that night he felt that only his white man's wits could help them to cope against the wiles of any trader who might, in his quest for fresh water or copra, chance upon the island.

Such a storm as had driven the *Sea Bird* far out of its course, might throw a trading schooner in the path of the island. He was its only protection against the ruin that would follow. And in the background of that tenacious fight Papela moved, shadowy and alluring.

WHEN he awoke from the troubled sleep that followed, he felt a pressing need for vigorous exercise. Armed with a spear, in case he should meet one of the wild boar that frequented the jungle, he threaded his way through sinuous paths and climbed to the top of the cliff, against which the surf thundered ceaselessly. From below came the faint, querulous cry of wild sea-fowl, accentuating the almost unearthly desolation of the spot. He had hardly won to its top when he made out the topsails of a schooner, mounting over the ocean's rim.

There he lingered, torn more poignantly than ever by conflicting resolutions, until he could make out the smother of foam at the schooner's bows. Then he tore recklessly down the rocks and plunged into the jungle.

When Jerry had made the beach, the stranger had hove to a mile or so beyond the reefs. Mustering a crew he stocked a prahu with fresh fruit, eggs and chickens, and took the steering-oar into his own hands. Out through the gap in the barrier reef the prahu shot, while the white serpents on either hand lifted their heads to fall back hissing into the welter of the breakers. With a flourish of seamanship he laid his outrigged craft alongside the low freeboard of the schooner, and scrambled over the rail.

The feel of her lifting decks shot through him with an unforgettable thrill. The sweep of them brought back with a surge the old call of the sea. Through the hard-bitten crew he elbowed his way, and the red-bearded skipper welcomed him as an equal, and led the way to the cabin. There, following the unwritten formula of the sea, he placed a bottle and two glasses between them.

The skipper followed the story of the shipwreck with a pounding palm that rattled the glasses, interrupting only with deep-sea oaths that jarred on the ears of the castaway. He had come to the point of his recovery from the nightmare of forty-odd hours on the frail raft, when the skipper launched, with many a profane bit, on his yarn of just such an out-of-the-way island where the same typhoon had blown him. It was a sordid enough tale, the hard bargain he had driven with a guileless people. The tale of a garden spot that he and his crew had turned into a shambles of glutted lust before they had pulled up anchor.

Under its lead Jerry grew confidential. What he had told before seemed of little moment to the open-mouthed trader. His eyes grew bright with the fires of cupidity that had kindled anew in their flinty depths. His tongue thrust out to moisten his lips, and he poured his gin with a free hand and gulped it neat.

"I'll get up a *fiesta* for you to-morrow, Captain," Jerry continued, "with a dance in the evening and then, in the morning——"

"Yes, yes, in the morning? Damn it, man, the pearls!"

"And in the morning we'll make a trip to the pearling-banks. You'll see my crew slip off into the cool water, and you can follow them down, and watch them pop up with shells that are fair rotten with the beauties."

THE skipper's chest was heaving with excitement. He snapped his thumbs across his index fingers as though he could feel the pearls there.

"And the ones that the pretty dears are wearing; it would be a crime to leave them behind," he leered.

"You can twist the strings of them about your fingers to-morrow just as easy as you can twist the women about them," promised Jerry. "Just bring some of your trading trinkets ashore. They'll turn them in like so many trading-stamps if you flash a mirror or a comb before their eyes."

The red-bearded skipper guffawed his appreciation, but protested bitterly against delay. Jerry met his turgid stream of argument with skilful portrayal of the island and its treasures; allayed his fears that a rival trader might intervene.

"I'll have to shove off now, Captain," he urged, "and start things rolling. But I'll be back before sundown with a handful of pearls that will stagger your eyes. I've waited long weeks for a man of your caliber so that I could make a getaway."

The glasses clinked again and the trader found his feet unsteadily.

"Aye, we'll make love to the darlings. That's more genteel than slitting their throats for their pretty necklaces," he rumbled. "Then it's up anchor for the nearest port, and we'll not be long finding a hussy to dangle a string of them about her neck."

"You'll have to let the crew in on a share of this," counseled Jerry, and waited for the storm of protesting oaths to subside.

THEN he showed him that the men forward had doubtless heard enough from the artless crew of the prahu to get an inkling of the island's untouched treasures. From the looks of them, Jerry wagered, there was not a man of them who could ever make his way back to the island again, and the secret would be safe if the skipper beached every man Jack of them as soon as he made port. His arguments scored, and the skipper swore that the crew should have its modest share of the loot.

The chorus of shouts that reached the receding prahu told him that the bargain had been sealed.

Well before dusk Jerry made his way back to the schooner, this time alone in a single outrigged prahu which he could handle with ease. When he spilled his handful of gems across the skipper's table, the smoke-filled cabin went silent for a moment at the iridescent, glowing proof of his tale. Then skipper and crew, some crowded about the open cabin hatch, broke out in a tumult of low-gasped oaths, exultant shouts, in a frenzy of joy.

The skipper curled his hairy hand and scooped up the scattered pearls, soft yellow, pale rose and gleaming white of tint, rich in luster, round globes of beautiful sheen. Close under the lighting of the oil-lamp swinging in its brass gimbals he

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held them, and gloated over them like a man bereft.

"Break out the gin, cookie!" he roared. "We're a bloomin' lot of millionaires that'll be drinkin' champagne out of the bottle in a fortnight!"

The drunken revel was at its height when Jerry Martingale stole unobserved from the cabin. The deck was deserted, for the anchor watch was below with his mates. Off to leeward the shadow of the island lay, bathed in the moonlight. To windward the sea was ruffled in the freshening breeze. The eternal threat of the drumming surf smote with a new significance on his ears.

He walked up to the bows and dropped to his knees. The muffled clink of a belaying-pin followed his movements. There was a splash of chain off the bows, a vortex of phosphorescent water leaped up and died, and the anchor chain on deck slid back on the iron plates in a limp, severed length. Out of the cabin came a chorus of ribald song.

At his directions the schooner's crew had lowered away from its lashings amidships the thirty-foot gasoline launch. Into it, trailing astern, he shifted with quick hands his store of provisions and water from the prahu, and then cut the latter adrift. The schooner was already lifting to the incoming waves and wind, and making sternway. As he lowered himself over the stern into the launch and cut the painter with his jack-knife, the schooner spun slowly on her heel and headed for the lee shore. The spray hurtled over the launch, but still Jerry watched and waited, choking down the engine to speed enough to hold the launch to the wind and sea. Like a ghost the schooner drifted on, and the gap between her and the smother of crashing surf narrowed by leaping spaces.

The muffled sound of running feet, cries of fear and the tattoo of blocks and gear, futile noises, were swallowed up by the drumming surf. He heard, after an interval, the rending crash of the hull on serrated coral rock and the splintering of falling topgear. Then only the sullen boom of the breakers as they dragged down their prey. His jaws were set, his face white, and his eyes bitter with contempt.

For a moment he stood straight in the stern sheets of the dancing launch, and waved an arm in salute to the island where Papela still ruled. Then he bent to his engine and drove at full speed out to sea. Overhead, the great lustrous stars filled the skies, and once again they seemed to him like the Golden Sweet apples of his boyhood, the symbol of his people.

The Needle's Eye

By Glenn Ward Dresbach

NEITHER a woman nor a man long poor
And humble, used to taking things that come,
With wealth thrust quickly in worn hands, can pass
Into the Kingdom of the Rich—no more
Than camels can pass through the needle's eye——

Josiah had been told, with doubting eyes,
That he was worth a million dollars. Then
He put away his hammer and his saw
And went to see the oil-well on his land
That had been worthless for so many years
Of aching toil, and with him went his wife
In bright new calico, too awed to speak.

They saw the source of this strange wealth that came
From ground that failed to give good crops, but still
They could not understand all that it meant.
Upon the way home through the heated dust
Josiah told his wife that she could have
All she had wanted, and they talked about
The fine hotel that they would build in town
When they had sold the plain board rooming-house
That for a year had driven Want away
When men rushed to the little town to drill
For oil——

Now in that little town it's told
How old Josiah put his tools away
And took no care for odd jobs waiting him,
And then grew restless when a crew of men
Began to build his fine hotel—and, charmed
With wages higher than his dreams had known,
He went to work upon his own hotel
For day's pay and, while working overtime
For greater profit, died——

And it is told
How his old wife, with eyes that hid their tears,
When the hotel was finished, took a room
That was the cheapest and kept on at work
About the place in utter loneliness,
With only one extravagance in all
The years she lived: Josiah's picture there,
Enlarged and framed in gold, beside her bed.

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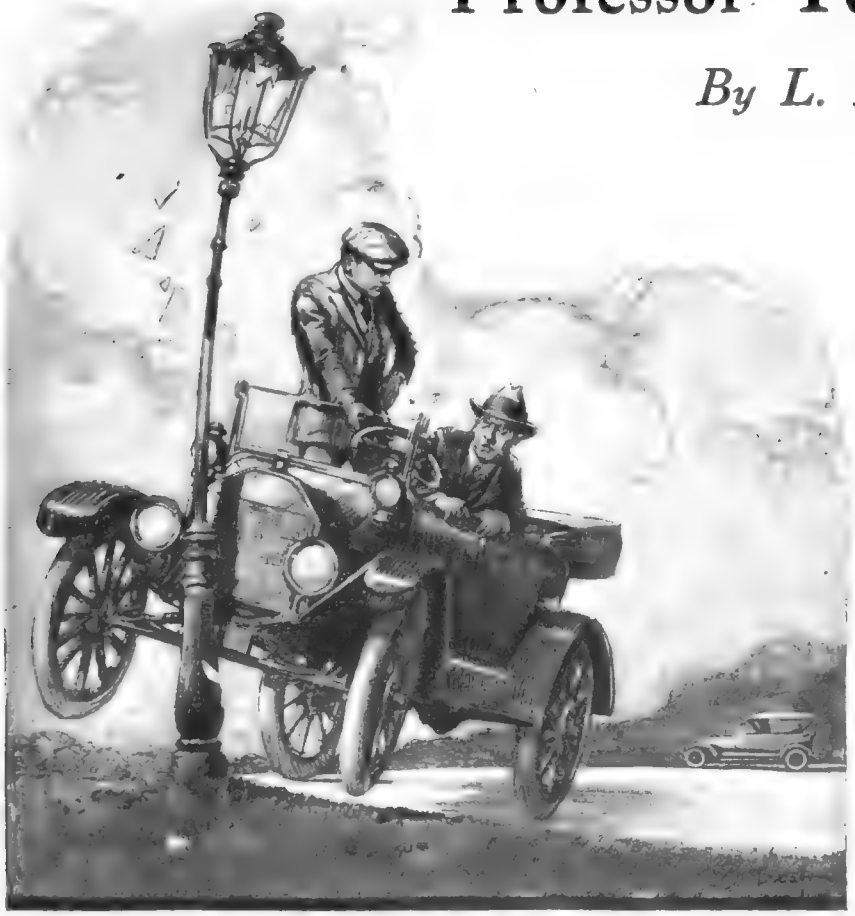
Professor Todd's Used Car

By L. H. Robbins



Fortunately for my radiator, the lamp-post into which he steered me was poorly rooted.

HE WAS a meek little man with sagging frame, dim lamps and feeble ignition. Anxiously he pressed the salesman to tell him which of us used cars in the wareroom was the slowest and safest.

The salesman laid his hand upon me and declared soberly: "You can't possibly go wrong on this one, Mr. Todd." To a red-haired boy he called, "Willie, drive Mr. Todd out for a lesson."

We ran to the park and stopped beside a lawn. "Take the wheel," said Willie.

Mr. Todd demurred. "Let me watch you a while," he pleaded. "You see, I'm new at this sort of thing. In mechanical matters I am helpless. I might run somebody down or crash into a tree. I—I don't feel quite up to it to-day, so just let me ride around with you and get used to the—the motion, as it were."

"All you need is nerve," Willie replied. "The quickest way for you to get nerve is to grab hold here and, as it were, drive."

"Driving, they say, *does* give a man self-confidence," our passenger observed tremulously. "Quite recently I saw an illustration of it. I saw an automobilist slap his wife's face while traveling thirty miles an hour."

"They will get careless," said Willie.

Mr. Todd clasped the wheel with quivering hands and braced himself for the ordeal.

"Set her in low till her speed's up," Willie directed. "Then wiggle her into high."

It was too mechanical for Mr. Todd. Willie translated with scornful particularity. Under our pupil's diffident manipulation we began to romp through the park at the rate of one mile an hour.

Willie fretted. "Shoot her some gas," said he. "Give it to her. Don't be a-scared." He pulled down the throttle-lever himself.

My sudden roaring was mingled with frightened outcries from Todd. "Stop! Wait a minute! Whoa! Help!"

Fortunately for my radiator, the lamp-post into which he steered me was poorly rooted. He looked at the wreckage of the glass globe on the grass, and declared he had taken as much of the theory of motoring as he could absorb in one session.

"This is the only lesson I can give you free," said Willie. "You'd better keep on while the learning's cheap."

TO FREE education and to compulsory education Mr. Todd pronounced himself opposed. Cramming was harmful to the student; the elective method was the only humane one. He put off the evil hour by engaging Willie as a private tutor for the remaining afternoons of the month.

I have met many rabbits but only one Todd. He would visit me in the barn and look at me in awe by the half-hour. Yet I liked him; I felt drawn toward him in sympathy, for he and I were fellow victims of the hauteur of Mrs. Todd.

In my travels I have never encountered a glacier. When I do run across one I shall be reminded, I am certain, of Mr. Todd's lady.

"So you are still alive?" were her cordial words as we rolled into the yard on the first afternoon.

"Yes, my dear." His tone was almost apologetic.

"Did he drive it?" she asked Willie.

"I'll say so, ma'am."

She looked me over coldly. When she finished, I had shrunk to the dimensions of a wheelbarrow. When Todd sized me up in the warehouse only an hour before, I had felt as imposing as a furniture van.

"Put it in the barn," said Mrs. Todd, "before a bird carries it off."

I BEGAN to suspect that a certain little stranger was not unanimously welcome in that household. For a moment I was reassured, but only for a moment.

"John Quincy Burton says," she observed, "that a little old used car like this is sometimes a very good thing to own."

"That is encouraging," said Todd, brightening. In his relief he explained to Willie that John Quincy Burton drove the largest car in the neighborhood and was therefore to be regarded as an authority.

"Yes," Mrs. Todd concluded, "he says he thinks of buying one himself to carry in his tool-box."

Willie was an excellent teacher, though a severe disciplinarian.

But by way of amends for the rigors of the training, Willie would take Mr. Todd after the practise hour for a spin around the park. At those times I came to learn that the collision I had had with a trolley-car before Todd bought me had not left me with any constitutional defect. I still had power under my hood, and speed in my wheels. But what good were power and speed to me now? I doubted that Todd would ever push me beyond a crawl.

Yet I had hope, for when his relaxation from the tension of a lesson had loosened his tongue he would chatter to Willie about self-confidence.

"Some day, you say, I shall be able to drive without thinking?"

"Sure! You won't have to use your bean any more'n when you walk."

At nights, when no one knew, Mr. Todd would steal into the barn and, after performing the motions of winding me up, would sit at the wheel and make believe to drive.

"I advance the spark," he would mutter, "I release the brake, I set the gear, and ever so gently I let in the clutch. Ha! We move, we are off! As we gather speed I pull the gear-lever back, then over, then forward. Now, was that right? At any rate we are going north, let us say, in Witherspoon Street. I observe a limousine approaching from the east in a course perpendicular to mine. It has the right of way, Willie says, so I slip the clutch out, at the same time checking the flow of gasoline. . . ."

Thus in imagination he would drive; get out, crank, get in again, and roll away in fancy, earnestly practising by the hour in the dark and silent barn.

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"I'm getting it," he would declare. "I really believe I'm getting it!"

And he got it. In his driving examination he stalled only once, stopping dead across a trolley track in deference to a push-cart. But he was out and in and off again in ten seconds, upbraiding me like an old-timer.

Said the inspector, stepping out at last and surely offering a prayer of thanks to his patron saint: "You're pretty reckless yet on corners, my friend." But he scribbled his O. K.

The written examination in the City Hall Mr. Todd passed with high honors. Willie, who was with us on the fateful morning, exclaimed in admiration: "One hundred! Well, Mr. Todd, you're alive, after all—from the neck up, at least."

IN GRATITUDE for the compliment, the glowing graduate pressed a bonus of two dollars into the panegyrist's palm. "Willie," he exulted, "did you hear the inspector call me reckless?"

I can scarcely think of the Todd of the succeeding weeks as the same Todd who bought me. He changed even in looks. He would always be a second, of course, but his frame had rigidity now, his lamps sparkled, he gripped the wheel with purposeful hands and trampled the pedals in the way an engine likes. In his new assurance he reminded me strongly of a man who drove me for a too brief while in my younger days—a rare fellow, now doing time, I believe, in the penitentiary.

No longer Todd and I needed the traffic cop's "Get on out of there, you corn-sheller!" to push us past the busy intersection of Broad and Main Streets. We conquered our tendency to scamper panic-stricken for the sidewalk at the raucous bark of a jitney bus. In the winding roads of the park we learned to turn corners on two wheels and rest the other pair for the reverse curve.

One remembered day we went for a run in the country. On a ten-mile piece of new macadam he gave me all the gas I craved. It was the final test, the consummation, and little old Mr. Todd was all there. I felt so good I could have blown my radiator cap off to him.

For he was a master I could trust—and all my brother used cars, whether manufactured or merely born, will understand what comfort that knowledge gives a fellow. I vowed I would do anything for that man! On that very trip, indeed, I carried him the last homeward mile on nothing in my tank but a faint odor.

II

MRS. TODD was one of those gentle souls who get their happiness in being unhappy in the presence of their so-called loved ones. She was perpetually displeased with Todd.

His Christian name was James, but she did not speak Christian to him. When she hailed him from the house she called him "Jay-eems"—the "eems" an octave higher than the "Jay."

He would drop the grease-can or the monkey-wrench to rush to her side.

"Look at your sleeves!" she would say. "Your best shirt!" Words failing her, she would sigh and go into a silence that was worse than words. He was a great burden to her.

Humbly he entreated her one day for an obsolete tooth-brush. "I want to clean spark-plugs with it," he explained.

"Next," she replied, icily, "you'll be taking your little pet to the dentist, I suppose."

From such encounters Jay-eems would creep back to the barn and seek consolation in tinkering around me.

He liked to take the lid off my transmission-box and gaze at my wondrous works. He was always tightening my axle-burrs, or dosing me with kerosene through my hot-air pipe, or toying with my timer. While he was never so smart as Willie about such things, he was intelligent and quick to learn; and this was not surprising to me after I discovered the nature of his occupation in life.

I had taken him to be a retired silk-worm fancier, a chronic juryman, or something of the sort. But shiver my windshield if he wasn't a professor in a college!

On the morning when first he dared to drive me to his work, the college must have got wind of our coming, for the students turned out in a body to cheer him as he steered in at the campus gate, and the faculty gathered on the steps to shake his hand.

A bald-headed preceptor asked him if he meant to cyanide me and mount me on a pin for preservation in the college museum. The chancellor inquired if Todd had identified me. Todd said he had. He said I was a perfect specimen of *Automobilum cursus gaudium*, the most beautiful species of the *Golikelleæ* family. It was the nearest he ever came to profanity in my hearing. I suppose he got it from associating with Willie.

THEY demanded a speech, and he made one—about me. He said that my name was *Hilaritas*, signifying joy. He said among other flattering things, that I was no common mundane contraption, though such I might seem to the untutored eye. In their studies of the Greek drama they had read of gods from the machine. I was a machine from the gods. In my cylinders I consumed nectar vapor, in my goo-cups ambrosia, in my radiator flowed the crystal waters of the Fount of Bandusia.

Three other items of his eulogium I remember: The breath of Pan inflated my tires, I could climb Olympus in high, and he, James Todd, a mere professor in a college, while sitting at my wheel, would not bare his head to Zeus himself, no, nor even to the chairman of the college board of trustees.

His nonsense appeared to be as popular in that part of town as it was unpopular in another. They gave the varsity yell with his name at the end.

The day came when Mrs. Todd risked her life in our sportive company. She made it

At nights, when no one knew, Mr. Todd would steal into the barn and would sit at the wheel and make believe to drive.

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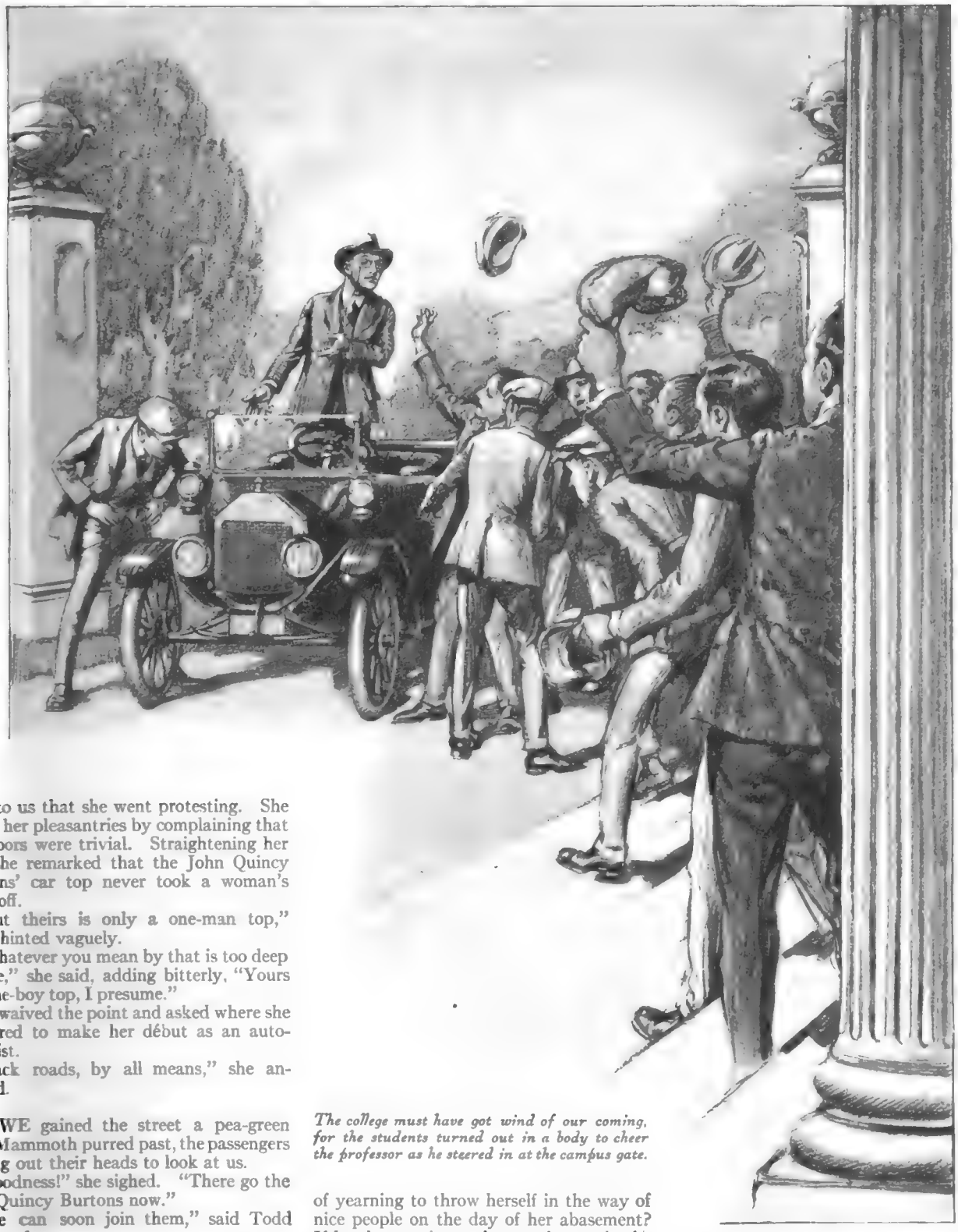

The college must have got wind of our coming, for the students turned out in a body to cheer the professor as he steered in at the campus gate.

clear to us that she went protesting. She began her pleasantries by complaining that my doors were trivial. Straightening her hat, she remarked that the John Quincy Burtons' car top never took a woman's scalp off.

"But theirs is only a one-man top," Todd hinted vaguely.

"Whatever you mean by that is too deep for me," she said, adding bitterly, "Yours is a one-boy top, I presume."

He waived the point and asked where she preferred to make her début as an automobilist.

"Back roads, by all means," she answered.

AS WE gained the street a pea-green Mammoth purred past, the passengers putting out their heads to look at us.

"Goodness!" she sighed. "There go the John Quincy Burtons now."

"We can soon join them," said Todd confidently.

She expostulated. "Do you think I have no pride?" Yet we went in pursuit of the John Quincy Burton dust-cloud as it moved toward the park.

"Since you have no regard for my feelings," said she, "you may let me out."

"No, no, Amanda, my dear. Why, I'm going to give you a spin to Mountaindale!"

"I do not care to be dragged there," she declared. "That is where the John Quincy Burtons ride."

"Aren't they nice people? It seems to me I've heard you sing hosannas to their name these last twenty years."

They were nice people indeed. That was just it, she said. Did he suspect her of yearning to throw herself in the way of nice people on the day of her abasement? If he chose to ignore her sentiments in the matter, he might at least consider his own interests. Had he forgotten that John Quincy Burton was chairman of the board of trustees of the college? Would the head of the department of classical languages acquire merit in Mr. Burton's eyes through dashing about under Mr. Burton's nose in a pitiable little last-century used car that squeaked?

Todd gripped the wheel tighter and gave me gas.

"You missed that storm sewer by an inch!" she exclaimed.

"My aim is somewhat wild yet," he admitted. "Perhaps I'll get the next one."

"Jay-eems!"

"My dear, we have a horn, remember."

"You did not see that baby carriage until we were right upon it! Don't tell me you did, sir, for I know better."

"I saw it," said Todd, "and I was sure it wouldn't run over us. As you see, it didn't. Trust a baby carriage, my love."

His humor, she informed him, was on a par with his driving. Also it was in poor taste at such a moment.

In time of danger, he replied, the brave man jests.

We were now in the park. We clipped a spray of leaves off a syringa bush. On a curve we slid in loose gravel to the wrong side.

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"James Todd!"

"Yes, my dear?"

"Let me out! I decline to be butchered to make a holiday for a motormaniac."

"Don't talk to the motormaniac," said Todd.

She clutched a top support and gasped for breath, appalled at his audacity, or my speed, or both. In the straight reaches I could see the Burton Mammoth a quarter of a mile ahead. When it swung into the broad avenue that leads to the mountain, we were holding our own.

"You are following them—deliberately," said Mrs. Todd.

"Yet not so deliberately, at that. Do you feel us pick up, my dear, when I give her gas? Aha!" he laughed. "I agree with you, however, that the order of precedence is unsatisfactory. Why should we follow the Burtons, indeed?"

WE WENT after them; we gave them the horn and overtook and passed them on a stiff grade, amid cheers from both cars. But all of our cheering was done by Todd.

"Now they are following us," said he. "Do you feel better, my dear?"

"Better!" she lamented. "How can I ever look them in the face again?"

"Turn around," he suggested, "and direct your gaze through the little window in the back curtain."

She bade him stop at the next corner. She would walk home. She was humiliated. Never had she felt so ashamed.

"Isn't that an odd way to feel when we have beaten the shoes off them?"

"But they will think we tried to."

"So we did," he chuckled; "and we walked right past them, in high, while Burton was fussing with his gear shift. Give our little engine a fair go at a hill, my dear——"

"I am not in the least interested in engines, sir. I am only mortified beyond words."

She had words a-plenty, however.

"Isn't it bad enough for you to drive your little rattletrap to college and get into the paper about it? No; you have to show it off in a fashionable avenue, and run races with the best people in Ashland, and scream at them like a freshman, and make an exhibition of me!"

His attention was absorbed in hopping out from under a truck coming in from a side street. A foolish driver would have braked and crashed. I was proud of Todd. But his lady was not.

"You have no right to go like this. You don't know enough. You will break something."

He had already broken the speed law. Unknown to him, a motor-cycle cop was tagging close behind us on our blind side.

"If you think this is going, my dear," said Todd reassuringly, "wait till we strike the turnpike. Then I'll show you what little Hilaritas can really do."

"Stop at the car barns," she commanded.

We crossed the car-barn tracks at a gallop. The cop rode abreast of us now. "Cut it out, Bill," he warned.

"You see?" she crowed. "You will wind up in jail and give the papers another scandal. Why didn't you stop at the car barns?"

"Because we are going to Mountaindale," he explained cheerily; "where the nice people drive. Perhaps we shall see the John Quincy Burtons again—as we come back."

"If we ever do come back!"

"Or how would you like to have supper with them up there?"

She had gone into one of her silences.

III

WE SETTLED down for the long pull over First Mountain. Todd slowed my spark and gave me my head. Then he addressed the partner of his joy-ride in a new voice: "Amanda, my dear, you and I need to have a frank little understanding."

She agreed.

"For some years past," he began, "I have borne without complaint, even without resentment, a certain attitude that you have seen fit to adopt toward me. I have borne it patiently because I felt that to an extent I deserved it."

My floor boards creaked as she gathered her forces for the counter attack. He went on recklessly:

"In the beginning of our life together, Amanda, you were ambitious. You longed for wealth and position and that sort of thing, in which respect you were like the rest of men and women. Like most people, my dear, you have been disappointed; but unlike most of them you persist in quarreling with the awards of fortune, just as to-day you are quarreling with this plebeian car of ours. As you speak of Hilaritas, so you speak of me. At breakfast this morning, for example, you reminded me, for perhaps the tenth time since Sunday, that you are chained to a failure. Those were your words, my dear—chained to a failure."

"Do you call yourself a dazzling success?" she asked.

"NOT dazzling, perhaps," he replied, "and yet—yes—yes, I believe I do."

"What I told you at breakfast was that Freddy Burton makes one hundred dollars a week, and he is only twenty-four—not half as old as you."

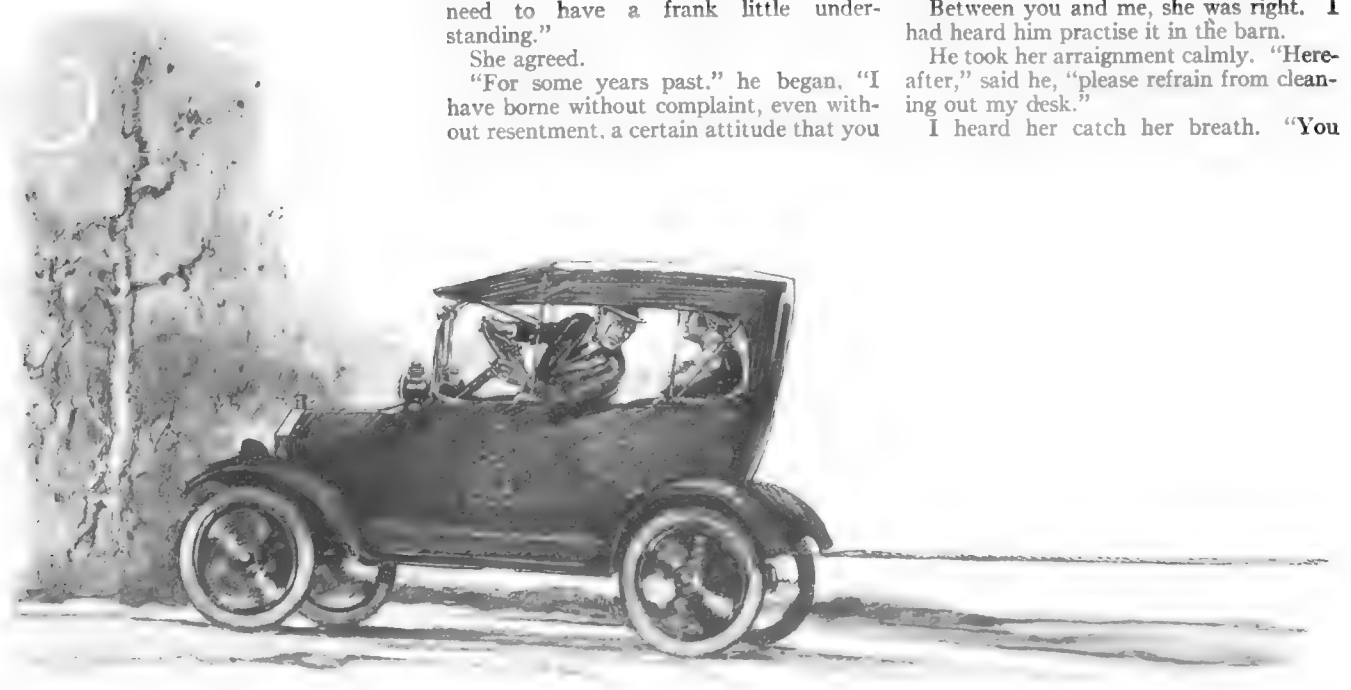
"Freddy Burton is engaged in the important occupation of selling pickles," Todd answered, "and I am only an educator of youth. Long ago I reached my maximum—three thousand dollars. From one point of view I don't blame you for looking upon me as a futility. I presume I am. Nor will I chide you for not taking the luck of life in a sportsmanlike spirit. But I do insist——"

"At last!" she broke in. "At last I understand some pencil notes that I found yesterday when I cleaned out your desk. A minute ago I thought you were out of your head. Now I see that this—this frightfulness of yours is premeditated. Premeditated, James Todd! You prepared this speech in advance!"

Between you and me, she was right. I had heard him practise it in the barn.

He took her arraignment calmly. "Hereafter," said he, "please refrain from cleaning out my desk."

I heard her catch her breath. "You



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have never talked to me like this before; never!" she said. "You have never dared. And that is precisely the trouble with you, James Todd. You won't talk back; you won't speak up for your rights. It is the cross of my life."

From the sound, I think she wept.

"You are the same in the outside world as you are at home. You let the college trustees pay you what they please. You slave and slave and wear yourself out for three thousand a year when we might have twenty if you went into something else. And when your building-loan stock matures and you do get a little money, you spend it for this—this underbred little sewing-machine, and lure me out in it, and lecture me, as if I—as if I were to blame. I don't know what has come over you."

I knew what had come over him. I knew the secret of the new spirit animating the frail personality of Professor Todd. And Willie knew. I recalled that boy's prophetic words: "The quickest way to get nerve is to grab hold here and drive." I worried, nevertheless. I wondered if my little man could finish what he had started.

He could. As we rolled down the mountain into the ten-mile turnpike where he and I had rediscovered our youth, he concluded his discourse without missing an explosion. I knew his peroration by heart.

"To end this painful matter, my dear, I shall ask you in future to accord me at least the civility, if not the respect, to which a hard-working man and a faithful husband is entitled. I speak in all kindliness when I say that I have decided to endure no more hazing. I hope you understand that I have made this decision for your sake as well as for mine, for the psychological effect of hazing is quite as harmful to the hazer as to the hazed. Please govern yourself accordingly."

HE OPENED the throttle wide, and we touched thirty-five miles. I felt a wild wabble in my steering-gear. I heard Todd's sharp command—"Kindly keep your hands off the wheel while I am driving."

At the Mountaindale Club Todd descended.

"Will you come in and have a lemonade, my dear?" he asked. There was a heartbroken little squeak in his voice.

"Thank you," she replied frigidly. "I have had all the acid I can assimilate in one pleasant day."

"May I remind you," said he, stiffening with the gentle insistence of a steel spring, "that I am not to be addressed in sarcastic tones any longer?"

The Mammoth slid up beside us. The stout John Quincy Burton at the wheel shouted jovially: "I tell you what, Todd, when our soberest university professors get the speed bug, I tremble for civilization!"

My owner grinned with pleasure.

"Mrs. Todd," said Burton, "after that trimming from your road-burning husband, I'll stand treat. Won't you join us?"

"Yes, Mrs. Todd, do be persuaded," Mrs. Burton chimed in. "After twenty miles with your Barney Oldfield you need nourishment, I'm sure. You and I can talk about his recklessness while he and Mr. Burton have their little conference."

IF TODD had an appointment for a conference there at that hour with Burton, I am positive it was news to Mrs. Todd and me. I could feel her weight growing heavier on my cushion springs.

"Thank you for the invitation," she replied, "but I am so badly shaken up, I prefer to sit out here."

To which her husband added, laughing: "She wouldn't risk having her new car stolen for anything."

It was twilight before we started for home, the Burtons pulling out ahead of us. At the beginning of the climb over the mountain I saw the Mammoth stop. We drew alongside.

"Out of gas, confound it," growled Burton, "and five miles from a service station!"

"I'd lend you some, only I haven't much myself," said Todd. "Got a rope?"

"Yes, but——"

"Oh, we can. We can pull you and never know it. Hitch on behind. We like to travel in stylish company, Mrs. Todd and I."

So we towed them over the mountain and left them at a red pump. John Quincy Burton's gratitude was immense.

"The pleasure is all ours," Todd assured him. "But, say, old man!"

"Well?"

"You ought to buy a little old used car like this some time to carry in your toolbox."

They were still laughing when we drove away.

Not a word did Mrs. Todd utter on the homeward journey; but in the privacy of our humble barn—

"Oh!" she cried. "I could *die!* Why did you have to say that to Mr. Burton?"

"Amanda!"

She subsided, but she had not surrendered.

"You didn't tell me you had an engagement with him. What——"

Todd laughed. "I was chosen this week, my dear, as a grievance committee of one, representing the teaching staff at the college, to put a few cold facts into John Quincy Burton's ear."

"You?"

"Precisely, my dear. I was the only man in the faculty who seemed to have the—the self-confidence necessary. And I made Burton see the point. I have his promise that the college trustees will campaign the state this summer for a half-million-dollar emergency fund, a good slice of which will go toward salary increases."

"Well! I must say——"

She did not say it. Silently she left us.

He lingered a while in the barn. He opened my hood, for I was quite warm from the towing job. He examined a new cut in one of my tires and loosened my hand-brake a notch. He couldn't seem to find enough to do for me.

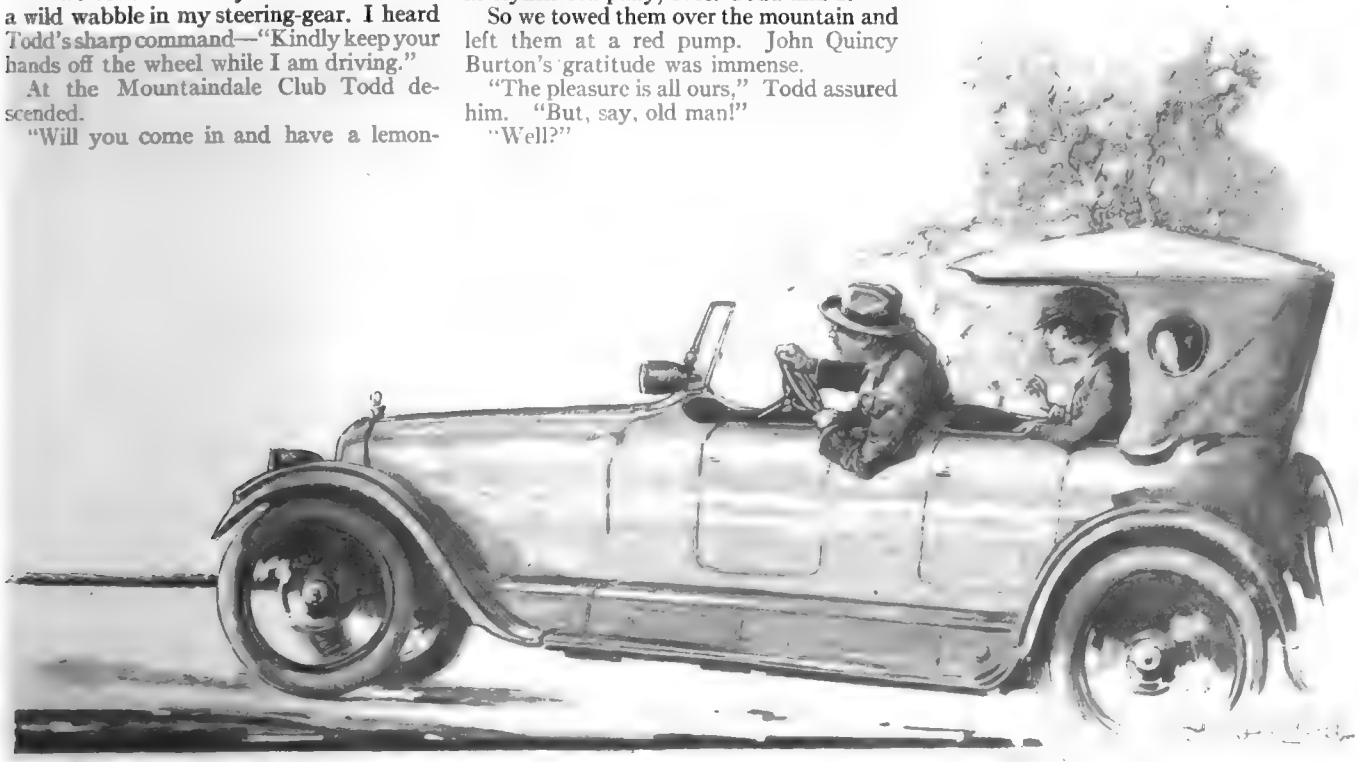
From the house came a hail. I am not sure that he did not hold his breath as he listened.

"James, dear!" again.

"Hello!" he answered.

"James, dear, won't you bring your automobile pliers, please, and see if you can open this jar of marmalade?"

My little man went in whistling.



So we towed them over the mountain and left them at a red pump.

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Mr. *and* Mrs. Oddy

By A. Neil Lyons

MR. NICHOLAS ODDY, cornfactor, of Devizes, in Wiltshire, received me by appointment in the international saloon of the Metropolitan Palace Hotel, which is fashionably situated in Bloomsbury Square, London. With Mr. Nicholas Oddy was Mrs. Nicholas Oddy, cornfactor's mate, also of Devizes.

Mr. and Mrs. Oddy offered me a hearty Wiltshire welcome; Mr. Oddy explaining to Mrs. Oddy that I was young Jack's friend, who wrote for the newspapers, but that I wouldn't take anything. To which Mrs. Oddy replied that if I was young Jack's friend I would *have* to take something, even if it was only a cup of cocoa.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Oddy expressed repeatedly, in very polite terms, their sense of obligation at my having come to see them. They knew that young Jack had written to me, for he was a good lad and without pride, although he had passed for a doctor; and was always showing kindnesses to his old aunt and uncle.

But they had never for one moment supposed—no, not for one moment—that anything would come of it. A busy man, such as they knew me to be—they had Jack's word for that—must have many more important matters on hand than Jack's old aunt and uncle from Devizes.

Still Jack said I would come, and Jack was right; for sure enough, I *had* come, and they were extraordinarily obliged to me for coming, as they were sure that Jack would be when Jack heard that I had come, which he certainly would, and at the risk of offending me they really must venture again to insist on my having something, if it was only a cup of cocoa.

Upon their cocoa being for the second time declined, Mr. and Mrs. Oddy looked at each other silently, but with a certain grave intentness, like two old owls conferring. And then Mr. Oddy spoke:

"You mustn't mind *us*. Devizes is a slow old place, and we're a slow old couple. We live a long way out of the fashion and we don't know any better. Very likely cocoa isn't thought a lot of here, not like it is in Devizes. Perhaps you would prefer a glass of port wine."

I do not often drink port just before dinner in August, and I was therefore forced into declining yet again the proffered hospitality of Mr. Oddy.

That gentleman again engaged himself in silent conference with Mrs. Oddy, and again spoke:

"At any rate," he said, "you will eat a bit o' dinner with Mrs. O. and me?"

I acceded readily to this charming proposition; and the owls, after blinking confusedly at each other in silence, then blinked benignantly at me, and speaking as with one voice, exclaimed:

"Well—that's one up for Jack!"

Mr. Oddy then extended the terms of his invitation so as to include dramatic entertainment and a "bit o' supper" and——

"You see," he said, "we thought, perhaps, if you didn't happen to be too busy with your writings, you would come along with us to-night to the first house at the 'Fastideum,' where we thought we'd go to have a look at Miss Daggs, the singer, and Polgo, this educated ape, and—all the other London actors. And after that we thought—that is, Jack thought—that perhaps you would take and show us round a few of the sights. There's one sight in particular Jack says we've got to be sure and ask you to show us. It's a kind of a hotel—a caffy, as the saying goes."

Mrs. Nicholas Oddy now rose from her chair. "I'll leave you gentleman to talk it over," she remarked. "It is time I got into some party clothes, if we are going to this theatre. Can you tell me, young man, if I'm expected to dress low?"

It was long since I had visited the Fastideum, that resort of the hardened-pleasure-seeker; but I felt safe in assuring Mrs. Oddy that any sort of bodily covering would satisfy its conventions.

Mrs. Oddy sighed contentedly. "To tell you the truth, I'm glad to hear it," she said. "I'm not used to these cutaways, and they make me feel ashamed. Nich, make the young gentleman have something, if it's only a cup—a glass of ale."

Mr. Oddy being thus exhorted, and the exhortant having departed, proceeded to wink in a profound and knowing manner. "I'll wager," he asserted, "that you know a better drink than port or ale *or* cocoa, if only you're left to choose it for yourself. What do folks drink in London?"

"At this hour," I confessed, "they usually drink gin or vermouth, or both."

"Then just you ask that young feller to bring us a tot."

THE brocaded person to whom Mr. Oddy referred in these inconsiderate terms was accordingly persuaded to deal with this matter, and when he had returned with an immense plated salver supporting some almost invisible beakers, Mr. Oddy, shutting one eye, performed an audible act of imbibition.

"K-k-keen," commented Mr. Oddy, "a k-k-keen drink. But bless me if I don't prefer an old-fashioned glass o' port. We're an old-fashioned lot in Devizes.

"As I was saying," continued Mr. Oddy, "young Jack was very downright about one thing: whatever else we did, we was to be sure and persuade you to take us to this here caffy, getting on about supper-time. But our treat, you understand—*our* treat. Now don't let there be any mistake about that. This here caffy, they call it—now, what do they call it? Ah! they call it the 'Caffy da Egypt.'"

I started. My hat! how I started.

I endeavored in the most delicate possible manner to hint to old Mr. Oddy that, taking everything into consideration, including Mrs. Oddy, one shouldn't, that is to say, one couldn't—er—well, hang it! We've all heard of the "Café d'Egypte."

But old Mr. Oddy was deaf to my delicate representations. And before I could argue further with him, a crackling proclaimed the stately approach of Mrs. Oddy.

I will refrain from describing the extremely satisfying repast which then ensued. Suffice it to say that both Mr. and Mrs. Oddy ate their dinner with great gusto and hearty appetite, and that they particularly relished the Pêche Melba. Mr. Oddy was heard three several times thus to admonish the person in brocade:

"Hi, young fellar! You can bring me some more o' that—that canned fruit and custard."

Then the "Fastideum," where the educated ape and other accomplished artistes were presented to us. Miss Daggs, "the singer," *i. e.*, Miss Minnie Daggs, distinguished for her interpretation of that almost national anthem, "Lift It Up a Little Bit," surpassed herself in audacity. Old Mrs. Oddy, who ought, by all the rules, to have been extremely shocked by Minnie's antics, was merely sympathetic.

"Poor girl," she remarked, "I hope they gives her decent money. It must be very hard work, this bobbing about. It must be very difficult to sing so loud, too!"

THE final exit of Miss Daggs relieved my spirit of its top layer of foreboding. But the top layer was a very thin one; much remained beneath it. For there was still the "Café d'Egypte" to be faced.

And the "Café d'Egypte" was in a particularly regardless mood that night, a circumstance which was rendered additionally embarrassing by the behavior of old Mr. Oddy, who, preceding us into the highly illuminated "lounge" of that institution, seated himself at a table which was already in the partial occupation of a—a lady.

She was a very vivid lady, very definitely hatted. She looked at old Mr. Oddy with very big, bold eyes, and by the time we reached the table Mr. Oddy had already shaken hands with her.

"An old friend, my dear—or near enough," explained Mr. Oddy to Mrs. Oddy as we took our seats. "She mistook me for poor Archibald. 'What cheer, Archibald?' she said."

"Oh, poor Archibald!" commented Mrs. Oddy. "Before he hurt his face with that motor bicycle, he and Nicholas were always being mistaken for each other. I never knew two brothers who were more alike, except for their features and the color of their hair. I suppose you're from Devizes, Miss?"

"No," replied the lady, "from Pimlico."

"Well, I somehow thought," admitted Mrs. Oddy, "that you didn't have quite the look of a Devizes gal. It's the—er—complexion, I suppose."

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"Nicholas, ask the lady if she'll take anything. She must take something, if it's only a cup o' cocoa."

I suppose it was, for the lady's complexion was laid on thick. Her two cold eyes were rendered conspicuous by contrast with this distempering. They possessed a quality of emphasis, like solitary plums in a flattened white pudding.

"When I look around me," mused old Mrs. Oddy, "at all you London ladies here, it seems to me that you've all got a sort of weary look."

"It's a weary life—in London," replied the lady.

"So I've been told," assented Mrs. Oddy. "Nicholas, ask the lady if she'll take anything. She must take something, if it's only a cup o' cocoa."

"Thank you," replied the lady. "I'll take a cup o' coffee. With *brown* milk," she added, looking sideways at the waiter.

"There, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Oddy. "Brown milk. You have got to come to London to learn the latest. There's a lot of strange things in London."

The lady assented, with a thin smile.

"I should like to have a look at this milk," said Mrs. Oddy's husband, as the waiter appeared with a tray.

"Sorry," replied the lady; "they've mixed it in already." She showed them her cup, then quickly drank up its contents.

"Pardon me, ma'am!" exclaimed Mrs. Oddy, "but you've spilt some on your collar. It's such a pretty collar. Crochet, I believe."

"Yes," assented the lady. "An old-fashioned pattern. 'Irish rose,' they call it. Easy as easy. Perhaps you'd like me to show you."

"That I would," cried Mrs. Oddy.

So Mrs. Oddy, from Devizes, breathing hard and crackling, sat up close to the distempered lady and touched her shapely hand. And old Mr. Oddy sat close by, nodding his approval, smoking his pipe.

When we had returned to the clean street, Mr. Oddy expressed his disappointment with the "Caffy da Egypt" and his surprise at Jack. "Can't think what the fellar sees in the place!"

"Nor yet I," assented Mrs. Oddy. "But," she added, "that was a nice lady we talked to inside there. Proud to look at, but kindly mannered."

"Yes," said Mr. Oddy, "she was a nice lady!"

"But there, now," cried Mrs. Oddy, "if we didn't quite forget to ask her how she came to know poor Archibald!"

"Well, well; and so we did!" said old Mr. Oddy, shaking his head, resignedly.

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The Crowded Hearthstone

By Harold Titus

THE wedding of Lola Mason to Tom Heddon was occasion for the strangest show in which the dog had ever been an entry. There were no others of his kind on display, no ring, no judging; he was forced to compete for notice with cut glass and silver and furniture and such, and although he drew more than his share of attention, it was a stupid sort, he believed, for of all the exclamations his presence brought out he caught not one intelligent comment.

Usually at shows people would stop before him and say—"Oh, here's Beau Brummel!" as if they had been looking for him high and low; and then they would discuss all the fine points which went to make him a clinker among bull-terriers.

Not so at this affair. People spoke to him, but only because he was of such quality that his importance carried to the understanding of those who did not know dogs; consequently what they said was what the novice always says, and he sat on his table with an air that approached boredom.

It had been a queer change, anyhow, and mostly delightful. A kennel, run as Billing ran Wentworth's, is no place for a dog that is enthusiastically alive, whose every impulse is friendly action. Billing wanted to rear Beau Brummel a gentleman, which meant, among a few nice things, continual restraint, constant attempts to defeat his most genuine intentions and keep him steadily dignified—when the thing the terrier wanted was anything but steadiness and dignity!

He thought it meant a run with Billing when the trainer took him out that May morning, but it meant a bath instead, a clipping of claws and a thorough brushing. He was taken across the lawn to the big house, and grizzled Wentworth himself came out with a long envelope which he fastened to the dog's collar. On the envelope was written:

"A Beau for a Bride!
Introducing Beau Brummel of Lancaster.
His family credentials herewith."

Then he had been placed in the limousine and scooted into Detroit, sitting on the cushions, stiffly obedient and only betraying his high interest in other things, his longing to behave otherwise, by occasional thrusts of his nose or low whinings or shiftings of front feet as they passed dogs that were free to run as they pleased, or cross roads that led somewhere, or thickets that looked like fine places to investigate.

When they stopped, Billing took him up the walk to a large house on Jefferson Avenue, and they waited in the doorway for Lola Mason to appear. She emerged from the interior gloom into sunlight like sunshine itself, a radiant girl, fine-boned, fine-skinned, with lighted blue eyes, and poise and manner.

The terrier soon took an immense interest in young Tom, who had ousted him.

Doesn't everybody who loves dogs love a good dog story? Here is one—with a high-bred human-hearted little bull-pup for hero, losing and regaining his place at the crowded hearthstone. How he did it makes one of Harold Titus's best stories of this Western forest country which he knows so well, and pictures so vividly.

She stopped with hands clasped beneath her tapering chin and looked at the dog; and the dog stopped snapping at a fly to look up, head tilted to one side, as he studied her face. In a moment he wagged his tail in approval and started forward, and she dropped to her knees and took his face between her small palms and cried:

"Billing, he *isn't* for me!"

And Billing touched his cap and said that he was, with Mr. Wentworth's best wishes and, "'oping it ain't out o' place, mine too, miss."

Whereupon the girl sat back on her heels and Beau Brummel of Lancaster made a gesture as if to lick the hands which she clapped; but Billing disapproved of that, so he sat back on his haunches and scrubbed the step with his tail and whined delight.

"'Es a gen'leman, miss: 'e knows a lydy when 'e see's um," said Billing.

And then Lola was dancing back into the house, dog at her heels, calling on the family to come and see this gift. There was no restraint about her, and quickly the terrier let some of the enthusiasm which Billing had always bottled up spill out; by noon they were splendid friends, and Beau had seen and liked Tom Heddon and thought that his life had become much more worth while.

That night he slept in a house for the first time. Curled on a rug at the foot of Lola's bed he was very happy, waking now and then and rapping the floor softly as she moved in her sleep.

The confusion of the following morning was bewildering, and it was not until the guests began to inspect the gifts after the ceremony that the terrier came to himself. The expectancy which had been about him became less evident, his lolling tongue was withdrawn, his excited panting slowed, and he elevated his nose as he sat listening to the banal comments that were made about him.

But when a man led him out a side door to a waiting runabout the dog again evinced interest. He even whined shrilly in query, and the whine ran into a yowl of satisfaction as his mistress and master came down the steps, jumped into the machine and whistled him to follow.

Down Jefferson Avenue to Woodward, up Woodward through Highland Park, bowling over the concrete road, they went northward. Lola sat close to Tom as the noonday sun blessed them and Beau Brummel sat close to her slim feet, nose poked over the door and around the windshield, watching the country scoot toward them.

As they sped past the Wentworth place, Lola said, "Beau, there's your old home!"

And the terrier looked back and smiled a dog smile and promptly thrust his nose back into the sweep of cool air. What cared he for his old home, or anything old? The bars had been let down, there was something new in the air now—vibrant youthfulness about the voices of the two with him, a free-and-easy rush to the car that spoke of new horizons, of spontaneity, of love and laughter.

FLINT and Saginaw fell behind, and at dusk they dropped off the gravel roads and took up a sand trail that wound through a forest of jack pine, pine that switched Beau's nose as he held it out, and that smelled fresh and cool. A moon floated up and mantled the vast sweeps of country with its light. There were no houses, no signs of men—until midnight, when they stopped before a wire gate over which hung a sign, "Windigo Lodge."

In such manner they came to Dr. Mason's fishing retreat on the Au Sable, and for all of them a life of surprising ecstasy unfolded. This, though, is the tale of a dog, so pass by the happiness of a man and a woman and consider only the joy of an animal that comes into his own.

No kennel, no restrictions, no Billing; people that his discriminating taste approved, absolute liberty and a country to explore that was measured by long miles. He could unbend! No one expected anything else of him, and he leaped and yelped in the sheer delight of being free. Except for little things that were only decent, he could forget that there ever was such an influence as one middle-aged, sour man's idea of how a young terrier should behave!

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And he had companionship; real, constant companionship. There were long walks across the pine plains, along the high banks of the stream; walks without destination. At first the terrier stayed at heel, a remnant of his dignity restraining him from the impulse to examine every strange thing, but his tentative excursions were not followed by reprimand, and suddenly realizing that to amble was his privilege, he ambled with an ardor that increased until he tore about the strollers in wide circles, through poplar and pine thickets, diving into spruce and balsam along the river, stopping now and then to sniff inquiringly as the pointer strain faintly prompted a stand, occasionally pursuing a darting cotton-tail with an enthusiasm and confidence that was wholly puppyish.

Tom and Lola laughed whole-heartedly when he came swooping back to them, tongue out, ears up and eyes bright. They approved! So he would be away again, bounding tirelessly.

On the return to the house from those tramps he would pause at the door in sudden doubt of his status.

"He doesn't know he's welcome!" the girl cried after he had so hesitated several times. "Kennel days are over, Beau! You belong. Good dog! Come on!"

AND he came on with a dive that sent him rolling in the folds of a misplaced rug, from whence he emerged all panting delight.

But of all things it was the evenings on the hearthstone which seemed to mean most to the terrier. Michigan Mays are not balmy, and the caretaker kept a generous supply of pitch-pine in the bark box beside the great fireplace; and at dark Tom and Lola would sit cross-legged on pillows before the blaze, fingers intertwined, voices low, reading their future in the leaping flames.

Before them the dog would stretch, feet far toward the fire, eyes closed to a slit, quirking an ear occasionally, now and then flopping his tail in lazy satisfaction, and when the flames grew unusually high he would let his tongue loll on the stones and pant with happiness. There was no sigh or exultation about him at those times, but a mellow contentment, a settled sense of peace and security, that well-being which, in proper perspective, is of far more account than ecstasy.

But even successful honeymoons are not permanent, and after a seemingly brief span the bags were packed and the three settled themselves and headed southward to the home that was waiting.

For Beau Brummel there was no more frantic running through brakes and sweet fern, no more uninterrupted association with Tom and Lola, but on summer evenings and on long Sundays there was companionship which seemed all the better for the less satisfactory intervals. Solemnly each morning he stood by while Lola kissed her husband; then watched the car round the corner and stood a moment longer, nose working slowly. He made a daily tour of inspection of house, garage and yard. He supervised the butcher's boy and the ice man and others who came, and then waited for evening, when they might all be joined again.

He discovered Tom's tennis balls and carried one out, inviting play by muffled growls and plunges with stiff fore feet. He sat in the doorway of the dining-room during dinner, rather sedate and patient, but once it was over he commenced a boisterous chase round and round the table, growling in mock rage, until, on the point of capture, he would tear away through the house, piling rugs in disorder as he slipped and skidded on the floor until they cornered and mauled him much to his doggish delight.

He went swimming with Lola and her friends; he learned to fetch articles from other rooms; he became adept at eluding the doorman at the neighborhood picture-theatre and would come crawling under rows of seats until he found his people, at whose feet he would curl and make no betraying move until they departed; he played golf with Tom, taking great interest in that bound and roll of balls. When the two spent an evening away from him, Beau was always there with nose against the glass of the front door, on their return as if he had stood so since their departure, waiting only to pant a glad welcome.

IN THESE ways he endeared himself to the others and it was as if he had always been a part of the family, always free to play and demonstrate affection. He was loved and respected, and repaid them with his loyalty and a behavior that was universally good.

Then came fall and change.

Play times with balls and about the house suddenly became irregular and of short duration. Lola and Tom seemed abstracted, their minds on things which did not concern the dog. The fire was lighted in the fireplace and the three sat before it now and then, but there was none of the closeness which Beau had known before that other fire. He begged for heed with touches of his paw and sniffs and long stares, but was rewarded by only casual caresses.

By winter the dog had no manifest place in the family. His presence was not resented, but that was as much as could be said. He grew restless, he was in a constant quandary; now and then he would sit on the unlighted hearth with head down, dejected and lonely, rolling his eyes sadly when he looked about.

And then the household went completely to pot. There was an hour of confusion, sudden departure, and for a fortnight Beau was alone with the maid, who reminded him of Billing. Tom came in at night, but often he did no more than speak to the dog, though he whistled and seemed very happy.

Beau was hurt. He had been made much of, and now, though he had not offended the people he loved, he was overlooked. Mornings he would sit outside Tom's door waiting to hear him rise and dress, trying not to be too hopeful. That last was wise, for Tom would go away like as not with no indication of a farewell, and Beau would be alone with the maid and hear only her protests against his white hairs on the rugs. There was nothing to do but wait and wonder about Lola and hope. He couldn't help hoping a little!

Then Lola and the explanation came home. The explanation was a bundle which at times was very quiet and at others extremely rackety, but always it was the center of interest; and Tom and Lola lavished so much attention and so many superlatives on the bundle, which was Tom junior, that Beau in the course of a short time was thoroughly disgusted with it and them. At least, so he appeared. Jealously often feigns disgust.

The dog was forced to compete for notice with cut-glass and silver and furniture.

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Lola remained up-stairs a long time and the nurse would not let Beau in to see her. When she was carried down, the dog was so delighted that he cavorted about the room in a scramble and ended before her with a glad barking.

"Oh, Beau!" she cried in caution. "Stop it, sir!"

She was really sharp in manner and he stopped in surprise, waiting for some counter move to take away the sting of rebuke. But Lola only listened to hear if the bundle was noisy when it should be quiet, and the dog drew back, tail wagging sheepishly and ears down in apology. He sat in a far corner and licked his chops, and now and then rapped his tail timidly for attention, trusting he would be invited out. But they gave him no heed at all. He had only been happy to see her, and had been squelched for it!

It was unexplainable. He passed much time sitting in the lower hallway, ears stiff and head cocked, holding his breath to catch all sounds that came from above, but he could learn nothing that helped him and there was no one to aid his understanding.

A feeling of resentment followed this failure. He had been replaced, and unjustly; there was nothing he could do except to blame the bundle. He nursed this grievance and it grew, until when he heard those noises from young Tommy, he would grumble softly and shift his body in irritation.

Then one day when the baby lay kicking on the davenport they called him to come and see, evidence that there was still room in their hearts for him, but he did not take it so. He approached, lifted his nose and sniffed the infant. All his sense of injury swelled within him and, though he really did not mean it, he could not for the life of him keep the upper lip from a slight recession nor choke down the breath of growl that came into his throat.

There was a sharp move and a hard word from Tom; an order to leave the room; then a strained interval.

"Why, his nose is out of joint!" Lola cried finally.

"That or something. By Jove, we can't have that!" her husband declared.

And the dog was in disgrace.

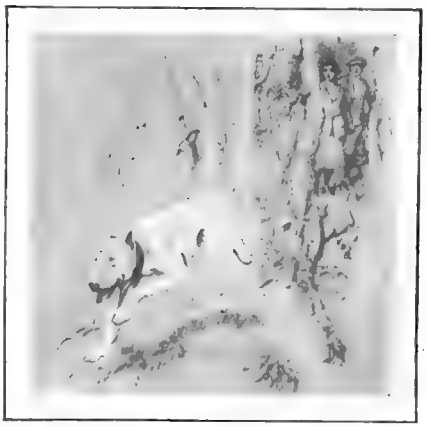
THEREAFTER he had few rights in the house. He was not allowed to sleep upstairs but consigned to the basement during cold weather and to the garage at other times. He became uncared-for and unwashed. If they carried the child into a room and happened to find him there—which was rarely—he was told to leave. There was some discussion of the advisability of letting the baby sleep on the porch unguarded from the dog, and once they talked of disposing of him wholly; in all probability this would have been done had he not come from Wentworth, and as a wedding-gift.

All this to Beau Brummel of Lancaster, who had been born and reared a gentleman! He was ashamed, but his pride was as strong as his shame. He had done wrong, but he could not go crawling and sniveling for pardon as a dog of a less noble breed might have done. He kept his dour front, but behind it he suffered, evidence of which might have been gathered without trouble had any one cared to understand.

Strange—also significant—fact: The terrier soon took an immense interest in young Tommy, who had ousted him. The baby was small and helpless and good-natured, and performed as Beau had never seen any animal perform. His curiosity was aroused. Too, the youngster was penned up and restricted; rather kenneled. Beau understood what that meant.

From concealment he would watch Tom junior at play, very still and stiff and intent, missing no move; and it was not unusual for him to quiver and whine inquiringly at intervals and, now and then, he would yawn and lick his lips and a longing would show in his black, bright eyes. He never ventured to make open advances when others were in sight. There was his pride!

The pride, however, came to be concerned only with Tom and Lola; not with his relations to the baby at all. Young Tom liked bones; that was another bond, and recognition of it occasioned Beau's



He tore about the strollers in wide circles with an enthusiasm that was wholly puppyish.

first act of stealthy homage. The baby, safe behind his gate on the porch, was licking a bald chicken drumstick. The dog, hiding in the shrubbery, watched for a time, and then skulked off into the back yard, dug hastily to unearth an ancient but choice bone put by against a time of want. This, with great care not to be detected, he placed against the wicket which kenneled young Tom, and stole back to cover. The maid threw the bone away and said hard things about the dog, but Beau did not mind. He tried this again several times and wondered why the boy did not understand that the bones were for him.

He found other opportunities; small favors to be sure. He would retrieve balls and other toys that had gotten out of reach, placing them near to the small hands, and slinking back to watch. When Tommy picked them up, the tip of the terrier's tail would wiggle.

And so on, with no outward change.

In the baby's third summer, the automobile was again stuffed with bags and wraps and took up the way to Windigo Lodge. Beau Brummel was along, because there was no other place for him to go. Young Tom sat between his parents, and at frequent intervals made dives for the dog, who had never before been so close to him in the presence of others; but on such moves he was put firmly back, and one or the other would say:

"No, Tommy, he might hurt you!"

Beau, hearing, only shoved his nose a bit farther past the windshield as he winced.

The lodge was as they had left it four years before, except that the season was further advanced, warmer, and more people were about; Dr. Mason, with his friends, coming and going. Tom junior was every bit as enthusiastic over the place as the dog had been, but because of bodily shortcomings was less demonstrative. The stubby legs did well, however, and never tired of heeding the impulse to be gone into far and strange places, all of which caused his parents concern, his grandfather delight and every one much chasing.

All this was watched by Beau with a queer longing. He spent much of his time with Evans, the caretaker; not because he liked Evans, but because he must be somewhere. Now and then he would venture to the screened veranda of the big house and lie in a corner far from the people, but he did not lie quietly and was not at ease. His memory persisted in contrasts. On cool nights when the people gathered about the fire he would sit in the doorway and look broodingly, recalling those other times when he lay there so happy in being closely identified with the people on the hearthstone.

The setting refreshed for Tom and Lola memories of those other days and one night before the fire the girl said:

"Poor old Beau! How he loved the fire when we were here before." And, turning to see him outside: "Come on in, Beau. Remember the fire?"

THE dog responded without enthusiasm. He did not go through the group, but seated himself beside her chair and sniffed her hand and sighed. They tried to coax him to the hearth, but he was politely stubborn and refused to go; and after a time he stalked out again to watch the circle from a distance and whimper under his breath. He did not belong there now; he was under suspicion, and the worst of it was he had given them cause. He was quite miserable. Several times they tried to urge him in, but always he sat still and vibrated his tail and declined to go.

The season had been exceptionally dry. Heat had endured for long and, though the run of high temperature was broken at intervals, no rain fell. Brakes turned yellow, then brown, and even sweet fern shriveled. Some days there had been smoke and the people at Windigo talked casually of fire, but there was none near enough to cause actual concern. The day came, however, when the smoke was thicker and at night they could catch a distant glow of flames. In the morning the wind grew steadily out of the southwest and the sun was hidden. Ashes dusted down, ominously. At noon a fire-warden, eyes inflamed and face strained from work, stopped at the lodge. It would be well, he said, for them to throw a furrow about the place. He thought they had the fire checked, but the wind was growing, and one never could be sure.

There was no fishing that day. Evans worked through the brush plowing a strip about the property and the men remained close, ready for an emergency. The wind picked up.

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This bone he placed against the wicket which kennelled young Tom, and stole back to cover.

The falling ashes grew to small, smoking brands. Buckets were filled and Evans stationed on the roof of the big house to watch for sparks that might mean real danger. The wind was a gale and carried heat.

The warden came back through the smoke, his car hung with tired, grimy men.

"The wind's got the best of us back yonder," he said. "Got plenty of water for your buildings? We'll make a stand at your fire-break and the road here. We ought to be able to check it.

"Take the women out? Why, man, the country's afire on both sides of you. No. There's no danger if you sit tight; we've help enough for the work here."

There was confusion and growing anxiety. An hour later they could hear the crackle of the fire as it licked toward them through the timber.

Tom and the doctor remained with the women while the other men joined the fire-fighters in the forest. When people spoke, they did so in loud voices.

Throughout all this, Beau sat in the doorway of Evans's cabin. He would thrust his nose low and look at figures as they hastened through the smoke; he would whine now and then; once when a brand, glowing and smoking, dropped before him he drew back, frightened at fire out of its place. He whined lowly as he watched it smolder.

TOM commenced to call for more water to quench brands that fell on the lodge roof; the excitement increased. Then the dog stiffened with interest, not at the shouting or activity about the house, but at a scurrying, rather unsteady small figure which ran through the smoke. It was Tom junior making for the gate as he had done so unsuccessfully many times before. Beau looked toward the house, expecting to see some one dart after the baby and thwart his purpose or else go with him, humoring the impulse that led the youngster afar. But none came; Tommy had slipped away.

Beau sat down whimpering. A half-hour passed, and then he heard a voice lifted, not in a shout of command, but in a cry of fright. It was Lola's voice, and she ran from the house calling:

"Tom, the baby's disappeared!"

Her husband half fell, half jumped from the roof. Then *real* confusion. Danger to the house was forgotten; there was running about, there was shrill calling, and the dog, infected by the tensity, joined the people at the house.

"He was sleeping," Lola, in tears, explained. "He's gone—and where?"

She clung to her husband and he, white and shaken, was helpless to comfort her. They searched the place quickly, calling in voices that grew hoarse, and the terrier, following his master closely, inquiringly, mutely offering help, did his dog best to understand.

"If he's got into that—" the doctor began, looking into the rolling smoke, but did not finish, as though the possibility were too horrible for further words.

Tom Heddon stared wildly about. His eyes fell on the dog.

"Beau!" he choked, "Beau, where's baby?"

The dog looked hard into his face and waggled his whole hind parts; then, as Tom ran off, he started sharply, remembering.

SLOWLY he circled about, nose to the ground, sniffing, sneezing low and impatiently. His tail moved and stilled as he shoved his nose hard into the earth, one paw uplifted. He had it! He trotted on, stopped, swung back, sniffed again; went forward tentatively, then faster; then stiffened. With a yelp he raced back toward the house, leaping about his master, Lola and the doctor, barking in excitement, darting an excited tongue at their hands, as he did his best to convey his comforting news. But the distracted humans did not so interpret his demonstration. Instead Tom cried impatiently: "Get out, Beau!" And when the terrier persisted, he made a meanacing gesture.

That quieted the dog, who stood, enthusiasm dying, perplexity growing. Then he trotted swiftly and silently toward the gate. They did not understand, he could not compel their attention. He hesitated. No, there was but one way.

He dropped his nose again and smelled and passed out of the enclosure, out into the murk; he was lost to sight in a moment, and sounds behind him dwindled.

He went to the left along the sandy trail, nose continually low, tail indicating his varying success. Now he went forward at a gallop, again he stopped and made small sharp circles. Once he lifted his head and blinking, stinging eyes, he listened a long interval.

On down the road, with the smoke biting into the delicate nerves of his nostrils, making it harder for him to pick the scent, hackels rising when he lost it, whimpering in delight when he found it again.

The air was hot and growing hotter. To his right sounded a popping, a snapping, a rising and falling mutter. He stopped suddenly and peered into the smoke screen. He saw a tongue of dull flame leap up, and, a moment later, another, nearer. The wind was rolling the fire through that undergrowth faster than he could walk.

Sight of it gave full life to a fear that had been dormant through generations of breeding. Fire, out of place again! It drooped his tail, made him hesitate, as he stood there on three legs, his body swaying, between indecision to push on or to flee that thing. His upper lip drew back and he snarled sharply, twisting his head to summon rage that would override his fear. But the dread persisted; he did not want to face the thing which instinctively disturbed him.

But there beneath him was the faint scent of the runaway baby—the one with whom he had tried to share his bones, the one who had gone on into this fearful fire. They had suspected that he meant the youngster harm; they had failed to understand when, after all that he had suffered, he had offered his help moments before; and now the pride that had held him back for years, that had made him suffer because of the bad manners it had inspired, rose to its full strength. It was greater than the fear of fire, greater than his natural impulses. His snarling dropped to a whimper; not a cry of fright, but of eagerness; and shoving his muzzle again into the sand he resumed his way.

The fire crept closer to the road. It was harder to make his scent function. It became high pain to inhale that biting vapor, and that which he sought became fainter and fainter. Still he went on, at times turning his face to the right and snarling viciously at the creeping squadron of flames.

He sneezed and coughed; his tail no longer wagged, but was down; and he skulked along seeking to avoid the blistering draft that bore on him by keeping belly close to the ground. At times he was forced to use his nose to brush aside the powdery dirt before he could catch the scent, but he always found it; it always went on down the road, never ventured across the ruts.

AND then the dog stopped, turning half about as from a blow. The road veered to the right, toward the fire, and the flames had already crossed it!

There would be no scent there; he could go no farther. He backed, holding his head high, eyes squinted, working his mouth. The youngster had gone that way, he knew; the fire had followed.

And then his ears went up to catch a faint sound that had come to him above the noise of wind and flame. He cocked his head to listen and his whole body trembled as from cold. His ears twitched in effort; it came again, louder, between gusts of wind; and with a frenzied yelp, the terrier charged down the impossible road!

He stopped suddenly and peered into the smoke screen. He saw a tongue of dull flame leap up, and a moment later, another, nearer.

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Beau fastened his teeth in the back of the child's suit; he shut his jaws and backed away and dragged the baby out of the road.

There was fire all about him. The sand was scorching hot and sprinkled with brands that blazed. The air he breathed scalded throat and lungs, and those scattered brands which he trod upon as he went blindly forward seared his feet. The smell of his singeing hair was the only thing his nose could detect.

But somewhere down there, somewhere in that fire, the baby had cried; and Beau Brummel of Lancaster, who had been reared a gentleman, who had been suspected of treachery, had heard and his fighting pride was up! His eyes ran water and he could not see. He could feel the heat beating upon him from either side until it baked his very bones, and once, when the road went through a cut, he wallowed in flames until the pain of his blistering belly wrung a cry from him. But again he heard that sound, nearer, and yet again, and as the road swung to the left, freeing its one flank from fire, he saw with his tortured eyes. . . .

HANDS to his face, screaming shrilly, the baby ran forward, tendrils of flame licking at his garments, staggering in the loose sand, and as the terrier came abreast he stumbled and fell, face in the deep rut, and made no effort to rise, though hot smoke was within inches of his yellow head. He lay there screeching, beating his small fist into the earth.

The dog nuzzled him and barked and looked about, taking an instant to bite savagely his side, where flame had bitten before. He shoved his nose into the baby's neck and licked frantically; then yelped again, dancing about. Fire was scuttling through the dead grass right up to the road. Down yonder it was crossing! He bared his teeth at the oncoming menace and dived forward as if to fight it back.

Then he quieted. Tentatively, quite slowly, except for the frantic threshing of his tail, he fastened his teeth in the back of the child's stout denim suit, close to the neck. He worked cautiously for a hold that would not nip the flesh; he shut his jaws and growled and backed away and dragged the baby out of the road.

Tommy protested. He struck and kicked and screamed, but Beau did not desist. It was his forty-five pounds against the child's weight, almost as much as his own. He was weakened by the heat and smoke; that is, his body was weakened; his spirit had never been stronger.

A foot at a time—a yard or two. He had to hold the youngster's head high, he knew. It was the maximum test for his splendid neck and shoulder muscles; his feet slipped and slid on the slick, dry moss as he struggled with his load, and the fire was coming faster than he could walk!

The dog did not take the road. That went through, or at best paralleled, the fire. He struck away from it, his sense of direction leading him through the brush toward the lodge, angling away from the worst heat. But so slowly! His burned feet stung and smarted as he worked them furiously in the process. The clothing tore and he grappled for a fresh hold, snarling, eyes on the licking tongues that danced along, cutting down his lead. His neck became stiff and unresponsive from the racking strain. He backed, backed, backed, circling about stumps and tree clumps, so slowly, sacrificing so many precious inches. He coughed and choked and gagged, and his teeth were forced apart by the paroxysm. He snatched up his burden again as if it were a bone, with other dogs about. Through it all he growled frightfully, and his tail whipped back and forth.

His breath became a constant, hoarse sobbing. Where he had made yards he now made inches. He could no longer hold the child's weight from the ground. He bit and squatted and made his legs pull him backward, and the flames were coming faster than he could walk.

So they came upon him, and the game-warden held Tom Heddon back as, driven mad, he seized and swung a heavy oak limb to strike the terrier down.

"Man, he's not hurting him, he's saving him!" the warden cried, as he stooped. "See, he ain't hurt, his face ain't even scratched! There! He's crying again!"

Heddon, speechless, a-tremble with fright and relief, lifted his child, and the warden stooped to take the terrier's muzzle in his grimed hands as Beau, worn to exhaustion, lay on his belly, tongue drooling.

"Old boy," he said lowly, and that was enough. Dogs know: the warden was the sort who need never have spoken to him again. But he did say: "Without you this would have been hell itself!"

By the time the unhurt Tommy had sobbed himself to sleep the wind had swung to the northward, rain had drenched the country, and Windigo Lodge was safe.

SOME one lighted the logs in the fireplace. Others came down-stairs from the chamber where the child lay quiet, and gathered about the hearth. They were sitting there when Beau came in, his belly and one side plastered with grease the doctor had applied to ease the burns. He stood a moment in the open door and gaped. His ears were down, but not in apology for being there; that look of wonder and longing was gone. In spite of his burns, he seemed quite satisfied.

"Beau!" said Lola, and choked.

"Good dog!" grumbled the doctor, pushing his chair back. "Come in?"

Not a command; an invitation, such as he would have given a loved human. And Beau Brummel of Lancaster limped across the floor. He stood a moment sniffing Lola's hand and then, with a sigh, flung himself at their feet, well back from the warmth, but still on the hearth. His tongue lolled out happily, and his tail slapped the stones in languid content.

"He's come back to the hearthstone," said the doctor. "Queer — the brain processes of these lower animals——"

"Lower?" said Tom Heddon. "*Lower* animals? And once I thought——"

He did not finish.

AMONG the eight complete short stories that will appear in the August fiction number of EVERYBODY'S are "THE LALLAPALOOSA," another schoolboy story by Wilbur S. Boyer, creator of the "Johnnie Kelly" series; "HIS WONDERS TO PERFORM," by Lewis R. Freeman, in which a case of Extra Dry champagne plays an important part in the conversion of a cannibal chief to Christianity; and "THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD," by Barker Shelton, the story of a young dressmaker who "pretends," and of an ancient cab-driver in the role of Cupid.

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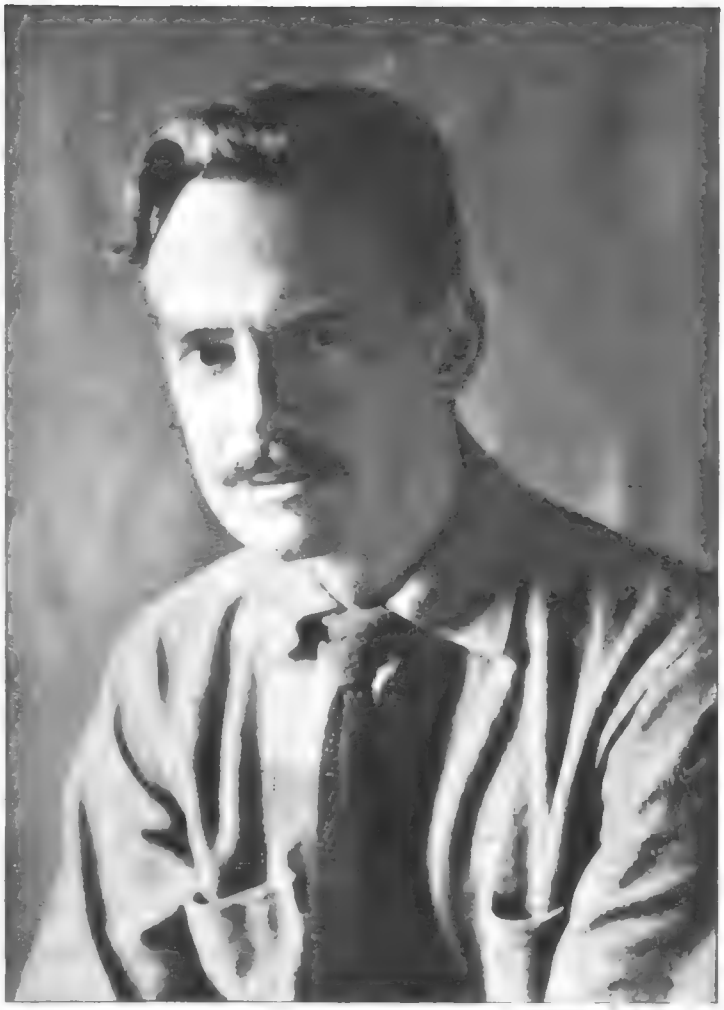
The Rise of Eugene O'Neill

By Alexander Woollcott

EACH year, in the retrospect of the theatrical season which hot weather brings to a close, there are certain men and women whose names stand out because it has been for them a year of advance in achievement and reputation. More often than not these are youngsters who have come out of nowhere to testify to the unfailing renewal of the theatre—that renewal whose manifestations remind you that you never know for sure what child scampering awkwardly across the stage will be the Ada Rehan of to-morrow, never can say of any hall-bedroom trunk that it does not contain the manuscript of the great American play.

Of all these newcomers, none is of richer promise than Eugene O'Neill, the author of "Beyond the Horizon," which made so deep an impression on New York in early February. It is true its author had been heard from before by virtue of several vivid one-act plays exhibited from time to time in the little theatres which abound in the side streets of Manhattan. But this was his first real play to be produced, his first venture into the commercial theatre.



Eugene O'Neill, author of "Beyond the Horizon." He is a newcomer, rich in promise.

"Beyond the Horizon" got in at all only by stealth. The play was so Hardyesque in its fateful melancholy and so void of all the elements which managers regard as essential in a popular play, that it was only by production for special matinées that it got a hearing. Once heard, however, there seemed so much unaccountable enthusiasm for it that the Little Theatre affably accepted it as a tenant, and there it stayed the season out, scornfully playing to crowded houses, the while there withered all around it plays that had been designed for popularity according to the time-honored specifications of a hit.

This play of O'Neill's is the tragedy of two brothers as different as night from day. *Robert* and *Andy Mayo* were both born on a little hill-cupped farm. The one is a dreamer who yearns for the highroad and the open sea, whose mind and body alike demand a wanderer's life, and as the play begins he is on the eve of departure for a three-years cruise in a tramp steamer. Andy, on the other hand, is a loving son of the soil, sure to wither if uprooted from it. Yet, by a trick of fate—as it happens, the sudden, warm confession of a neighbor's daughter—it is the wanderer who is tethered to the farm, the farmer who goes to sea. There then unfolds the tragedy of two men dragging out lives not in harmony with what they are.

The characters in this play, as in O'Neill's shorter pieces, are more real and more significant than any others in the motley population of the American drama. Its dramatic force and vitality are extraordinary. It seems a living, growing thing. There has been a tendency here and there to pronounce it outright the best play yet written by an American author. Perhaps it would be simpler, though more evasive, to call it one of the ten best, and thus escape the task of comparing the values of such widely varied works as "The Easiest Way," "The Great Divide," "The Show Shop," "The Yellow Jacket," "Seven Keys to Baldpate," and "The Poor Little Rich Girl."

Behind the writing of such a play as "Beyond the Horizon" there is an interesting biography. Seeing it so strong in its dramatic instinct, and yet so free from all the stencils and stock properties, you might guess it was the work of one born in the theatre but reared far from its inevitably staling influence. It was.

Eugene O'Neill is the younger son of that James O'Neill of the Booth and Barrett days who later accumulated a fortune touring with the everlasting "Monte Cristo." As a youth he was regarded by the wiseacres of the theatre as a hopeless ne'er-do-well, who would come to no good end. He went to Princeton, but was expelled therefrom for some exploit which an orthodox faculty doubtless considered as conduct unbecoming a Freshman. He went to Harvard, and his stay there was also brief. Then after many unchronicled but harum-scarum adventures, he went to sea before the mast. It has been customary to speak of his having run away to sea. This is inexact. He was shanghaied.

There followed some eventful, health-giving, inspirational years in many waters and in many different ports. He acquired then something of that serenity and detachment which is in the works of men like Conrad and McFee, who have lived much at sea—as though its spaces gave them a chance to look at life from above and without; to look at it calmly and disinterestedly as men look down on the checkerboard-earth from an airplane. It is interesting to note that when the wanderer came home to marry and settle down, he took as his house a deserted life-saving station on a lonely strip of land that juts from the New England coast, a bleak house that has as its front yard that same sea of which the music and the savor and the mystery is in every play that O'Neill has written since.

More plays are coming from him. One called "The Straw" which has a tuberculosis sanitarium as its merry background, was scheduled for experiment in Boston in May. A new one called "Gold," is on the cards for next season. Recently when a producer called on O'Neill to dramatize an Ibañez novel, he resisted all blandishments by explaining that he already had enough stuff of his own to keep him busy for the next ten years.

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Hidden Creek

By Katharine Newlin Burt

Author of "The Branding-Iron"

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Flames

A HOT dry day followed on the dawn. In his room Dickie lay across his bed. The sun blazed in at his single long window, the big flies that had risen from the dirty yard buzzed against the pane. Dickie lay there like an image of Icarus, an eternal symbol of defeated youth; one could almost see about his slenderness the trailing shattered wings. He had wept out the first shock of his anger and his shame, now he lay in a despairing stupor. His bruised face burned and ached, his chest felt tight with the aching and burning of his heart.

Any suspicion of his father's interpretation of his presence in Sheila's room was mercifully spared him, but the knowledge that he had been brutally jerked back from her lips, had been ignominiously punished before her eyes and turned out like a whipped boy—this knowledge was a dreadful torture to his pride. Sheila, to be sure, did not love him even a little bit; she had said so. All the longing and the tumult of his heart during these months had made no more impression upon her than a frantic sea makes upon the little bird at the top of the cliff. She had, he must think, hardly been aware of it.

And it was such a terrible and frantic actuality. He had fancied that it must have beaten forever, at her consciousness. Can a woman live so near so turbulent a thing and not even guess at its existence? Her hand against his heart had lain so limp and dead.

He hadn't hoped that she loved him the way he loved. Probably no one else could feel what he felt and live—so Dickie in young love's eternal fashion believed in his own miracle—but she might have loved him a little, a very little, in time—if she hadn't seen him beaten and shamed and cuffed out of her presence like a dog. Now there was no hope. No hope at all. No hope.

Dickie rocked his head against his arm. He had told Sheila that he would take care of her, but he could not defend himself. He had told her that he would die to save her suffering, but before her he had writhed and gasped helplessly under the weight of another man's hand—his open hand, not even a fist. No after-act of his could efface from Sheila's memory that picture of his ignominy. She had seen him twisted and bent and beaten and thrown away. His father had triumphantly returned to reassure and comfort her for the insult of a boy's impertinence. Would Sheila defend him? Would she understand? Or would she not be justified in contemptuous laughter at his pretensions?

Such thoughts, less like thoughts, however, than like fiery fever fits, twisted and scorched Dickie's mind as he lay there. They burnt into him wounds that for years throbbed slowly into scars.

At noon, the heat of his room became even more intolerable than his thoughts. His head beat with pain. He was bathed in sweat, weak and trembling. He dragged himself up, went to his washstand and dipped his wincing face into the warmish stale water. His lips felt cracked and dry and swollen. In the wavy mirror he saw a distorted image of his face with its heavy eyes, scattered hair, and the darkening marks of his father's blows, punctuated by the scarlet scratches of the emerald. He dried his face, loosened his collar and, gasping for air, came out into the narrow hall.

THE hotel was very still. He hurried through it, his face bent, and went by the back way to the saloon. At this hour Sheila was asleep. Carthy would be alone in the Aura and there would be few, if any, customers. Dickie found the place cool and quiet and empty, shuttered from the sun, the air stirred by electric fans. Carthy dozed in his chair behind the bar. He gave Dickie his order, somnambulantly. Dickie took it off to a dim corner and drank with the thirst of a wounded beast.

Three or four hours later he staggered back to his room. A thunder-storm was rumbling and flashing down from the mountains to the north. The window was purple-black, and a storm wind blew the dirty curtains, straight and steady, into the room. The cool wind tasted and smelt of hot dust. Dickie felt his dazed way to the bed and steadied himself into a sitting posture. With infinite difficulty he rolled and lighted a cigaret, drew at it, took it out, tried to put it again between his lips and fell over on his back, his arm trailing over the edge of his bed. The lighted cigaret slipped from his fingers to the ragged strip of matting. Dickie lay there, breathing heavily and regularly in a drunken and exhausted sleep.

A vivid flickering pain in his arm woke him. He thought for an instant that he must have died and dropped straight into hell. The wind still blew in upon him, but it blew fire against him. Above him there was a heavy panoply of smoke. His bedclothes were burning, his sleeve was on fire. The boards of his floor cracked and snapped in regiments of flame. He got up, still in a half stupor, plunged his arm into the water pitcher, saw, with a startled oath, that the woodwork about his door was blazing in long tongues of fire which leaped up into the rafters of the roof. His brain began to telegraph its messages—the hotel was on fire. He could not imagine what had started it. He remembered Sheila.

HE RAN along the passage, the roar of that wind-driven fire following him as the draft from his window through his opened door gave a sudden impulse to the flames, and he came to Sheila's sitting-room. He knocked, had no answer, and burst in. He saw instantly that she had gone. Her father's picture had been taken, her little books, her sketches, her work-basket, her small yellow vase. Things were scattered about. As he stood staring, a billow of black smoke rolled into the room. He went quickly through the bedroom and the bath, calling "Sheila!" in a low, uncertain voice, returned to the sitting-room to find the air already pungent and hot. There was a paper pinned up on the mantel. Sheila's writing marched across it. Dickie rubbed the smoke from his eyes and read.

"I am going away from Millings. And I am not coming back. Amelia may have the things I have left. I don't want them." This statement was addressed to no one.

"She has gone to New York," thought Dickie. His confused mind became possessed with the immediate purpose of following her. There was an eastern train in the late afternoon. Only he must have money and it was—most of it—in his room. He dashed back. The passage was ablaze; his room roared like the very heart of a furnace. It was no use to think of getting in there. Well, he had something in his pocket, enough to start him. He plunged choking into Sheila's sitting-room again. For some reason this flight

IV

THE STORY

SHEILA ARUNDEL, a seventeen-year-old, elf-like elusive creature, is left by the death of her artist father alone in the world. Sylvester Hudson, owner of a chain of rather disreputable hotels in the West, has bought a picture from Arundel, and calls for it the day after the artist's death. He takes Sheila with him to his home in Millings, ostensibly to help his wife and his daughters, Girlie and Babe, with the housework.

Hudson's son Dickie, clerk in the Aura Hotel, is an habitual drunkard, but sweet-natured and gentle, with a love of beauty and a poetic sense which his father vainly tries to suppress. He is greatly attracted by Sheila, and, although forbidden by Hudson to see her, determines to stand by her in case—as he thinks likely—she may need a friend. Mrs. Hudson is jealous of her husband's interest in Sheila, and insults her. Hudson persuades her to leave his home and to become barmaid in the Aura. He pursuades her that she can in this way exert a wonderful influence for good over the town.

Here Sheila meets Cosme Hilliard, a handsome, reckless cowboy, whose life she saves in a drunken brawl in the saloon. She also meets Christina Blake, a middle-aged, masculine woman who lives alone near Hilliard at Hidden Creek, and who offers her a home, should she wish to leave the Aura.

Sheila does not understand that gossip is centering about Hudson and herself but realizes that she is frowned upon by her former friends. She finally forces Dickie to an explanation of her position. Dickie asks her to marry him, but Hudson, entering at the time, misunderstands the situation. He strikes Dickie and orders Sheila out of Millings, telling her that he considers her no longer "good enough" to act as "beacon light" in the Aura bar.

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"Don't be frightened," he said in a rather uncertain voice, "I'm not near so desperate as I look."

of hers had brought back his hope. There was to be a beginning, a fresh start, a chance.

He went over to the chair where Sheila had sat in the comfort of his arms and he touched the piece of tapestry on its back. That was his good-by to Millings. Then he fastened his collar, smoothed his hair, standing close before Sheila's mirror, peering and blinking through the smoke, and buttoned his coat painstakingly. There would be a hat down-stairs. As he turned to go, he saw a little brown leather book lying on the floor below the mantel. He picked it up. Here was something he could take to Sheila. With an impulse of tenderness he opened it. His eyes were caught by a stanza—

The blessed damozel leaned out from the gold bar of heaven.
Her eyes were deeper than the depth of water stilled at even.
She had three lilies in her hand and the stars in her hair were seven——

There are people, no doubt, who will not be able to believe this truthful bit of Dickie's history. The smoke was drifting across him, the roar of the nearing fire was in his ears, he was at a great crisis in his affairs, his heart was hot with wounded love and his brain hot with whisky and with hope. Nevertheless he did now, under the spell of those printed words, which did not even remotely resemble any words that he had ever read or heard before, forget the smoke, the roar, the love, the hope, and, standing below Sheila's mirror, he did read "The Blessed Damozel" from end to end. And the love of those lovers, divided by all the space between the shaken worlds, and the beauty of her tears, made a great and mystic silence of rapture about him. "O God!" Dickie said twice as he read. He brushed away the smoke to see the last lines:—"She wept—I heard her tears." The ecstatic pain of beauty gripped him to the forgetfulness of all other pain or ecstasy. "O God!"

He came to with a start, shut the book, stuck it into his pocket and, crooking his arm over his smarting eyes, he plunged out of the room. Millings had become aware of its disaster. Dickie, fleeing by the back way, leaping dangers and beating through fire, knew by the distant commotion that the fire brigade, of which he was a member, was gathering its men for the glory of their name. He saw, too, that with a wind like this to aid the fire, there wasn't a chance for the Aura, and a queer pang of sympathy for his father stabbed him.

"It will kill Pap," thought Dickie. Save for this pang, he ran along the road toward the station with a light, adventurous heart.

HE DID not know that he had started the fire himself. The stupor of sleep had smothered out all memory of the cigaret he had lighted and let fall. Unwittingly Dickie had killed the beauty of his father's dream, and now, just as unwittingly, he was about to kill the object of his father's passion. When he looked back from the station platform, the roof of the Aura was already in a blaze.

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Part Two—The Stars

CHAPTER ONE

The Hill

THATCHER spoke to his horses, now fatherly, now masterly, now with a professional sarcasm: "Come on, Monkey, there's a good girl! Get out of that, you Fox! Dern you! You call that pullin'? It's my notion of layin' off for the day." Even at its most urgent his voice was soft, hushed by the great loneliness of this cañon up which he slowly crept. Monkey and Fox had been plodding foot by foot, the creaking wagon at their heels, since dawn.

It was now ten o'clock and they were just beginning to climb. The hill that looked so near to the mesa above Hudson's yard still stood aloof. It had towered there ahead of them as they jerked and toiled across the interminable flat, in their accompanying cloud of dust. The great circle of the world had dwarfed them to a bitter insignificance—a team of crickets they seemed, driven by a gnome. The hushed tone of Thatcher's voice made unconscious tribute to this immensity.

As they came to the opening of the cañon, the high mountain-top disappeared; the immediate foothills closed down and shut it out. The air grew headily light. Even under the blazing July sun it came cool to the lungs, cool and intensely sweet. Thousands of wild flowers perfumed it, and the sun-drawn resin of a thousand firs. All the while the rushing of water accompanied the panting and creaking of Thatcher's progress.

Not far from the road, in a tangle of pine branches, willows and ferns, the frosty white stream fled toward the valley with all the seeming terror of escape. Here the team began their tugging and their panting and their long pauses to get breath. Thatcher would push forward the wooden handle that moved his brake, and at the sound, and the grating of the wheel, the horses would stop automatically, and stand with heaving sides. The wagon shook slightly with their panting. The stream seemed to shout in the stillness.

Below, there began to be an extraordinary view of the golden country with its orange mesas and its dark purple rim of mountains. Millings was a tiny circle of square pebbles, something built up by children in their play. The awful impersonalities of sky and earth swept away its small human importance. Thatcher's larkspur-colored eyes absorbed serenity. They had drawn their color and their far-sighted clearness from such long contemplations of distant horizon lines.

Now and again, however, Thatcher would glance back and down from his high seat at his load. It consisted for the most part of boxes of canned goods, but near the front there was a sort of nest, made from bags of Indian meal. In the middle of the nest lay another bundle, of slim, irregular outline. It was covered with a thin blanket, and a piece of sacking protected it from the sun. A large clumsy parcel lay beside it. Each time Thatcher looked at this portion of his load he pulled more anxiously at his mustache.

When the sun stood straight above the pass and he stopped to water his horses at a trough which caught a trickle of spring water, he bent down and softly raised the piece of sacking, suspended like a tent from one fat sack to another above the object of his uneasiness. There in the complete relaxation of exhausted sleep lay Sheila, no child more limp and innocent of aspect; her hair damp and ringed on her smooth forehead, her lips mournful and sweet, sedately closed, her expression at once proud and innocent and wistful, as is the sleeping face of a little, little girl. There was that look of a broken flower, that look of lovely death, that stops the heart of a mother sometimes when she bends over a crib and sees damp curls in a halo about a strange familiar face.

Thatcher, looking at Sheila, had some of these thoughts. A teamster is either philosopher or clown. One can not move day after day all day for a thousand days under a changeless changeful sky, inch by inch across the surface of a changeless changeful earth, and not come very near to some of the locked doors of the temple where clowns sleep and wise men meditate. And Thatcher was a father, one of the wise and reasonable fathers of the West, whose seven-year-old sons are friends and helpmates, and towards whom six-year-old daughters are moved to little acts of motherliness.

THE sun blazed for a minute on Sheila's face. She opened her eyes, looked vaguely from some immense distance at Thatcher, and then sat up.

"Oh, gracious!" said Sheila, woman and sprite and adventurer again. "Where the dickens is my hat? Did it fall out?"

"No, ma'am." Thatcher smiled in a relieved fashion. "I put it under the seat."

Sheila scrambled to a perch on one of the sacks and faced the surface of half a world.

"Oh, Mr. Thatcher, isn't it too wonderful? How high are we? Is this the other side? Oh, no, I can see Millings. Poor tiny, tiny Millings! It *is* small, isn't it? How very small it is! What air!" She shut her eyes, drawing in the perfumed tonic. The altitude had intoxicated her. Her heart was beating fast, her blood tingling, her brain electrified. Every sense seemed to be sharpened. She saw and smelt and heard with abnormal vividness.

"The flowers are awfully bright up here, aren't they?" she said. "What's that coral-colored, bushy one?"

"Indian paint-brush."

"And that blue one? It *is* blue! I don't believe I ever knew what blueness meant before."

"Lupine. And over yonder's monkshood. That other's larkspur, that poisons cattle in the spring. On the other side you'll see a whole lot more—wild hollyhock and fireweed and columbine—well, say, I learned all them names from a dude I drove over one summer."

"And such a sky!" said Sheila, lifting her head. "And such big pines!" She lost herself for a minute in the azure immensity above. A vast mosque of cloud, dome bubbles great and small, stood ahead of them, dwarfing every human experience of height. "Mr. Thatcher, there isn't any air up here. What is it we're trying to breathe, anyway?"

He smiled patiently, sympathetically, and handed her a tin mug of icy water from the little trickling spring. The bruise of Hudson's kiss ached at the cold touch of the water, and a shadow fell over her excitement. She thanked the driver gravely.

"What time is it now?" she asked.

"Past noon. Better eat your sandwich."

She took one from its wrapping pensively, but ate it with absent-minded eagerness. Thatcher's blue eyes twinkled.

"Seems like I recollect a lady that didn't want no food to be put in for her."

"I remember her too," said Sheila between bites, "but very, very vaguely."

She stood up after a third sandwich, shook crumbs from her skirt and stretched her arms. "What a great sleep I've had! Since six o'clock." She stared down at the lower world. "I've left somebody at Millings."

"Who's that?" asked Thatcher, drawling the words a trifle, as a Westerner does when he is conscious of a double meaning.

"Me."

Thatcher laughed. "You're a real funny girl, Miss Arundel," he said.

"Yes, I left one me when I decided to go into the saloon, and now I've left another me. I believe people shed their skins like snakes."

"Yes'm. I've had that notion myself. But as you get older, your skin kind of peels off easy and gradual—you don't get them shocks when you sort of come out all new and shiny and admirin' of yourself."

Sheila blushed faintly and looked at him. His face was serene and empty of intention. But she felt that she had been guilty of egotism, as indeed she had. She asked rather meekly for her hat, and having put it on like a shadow above her fairness, she climbed up to Thatcher's side on the driver's seat. The hat was her felt Stetson, and for the rest she was clad in her riding-clothes—the boy's shirt, the short corduroy skirt, the high laced boots. Her youthfulness rather than her strange beauty was accentuated by this dress. She had the look of a super-delicate boy, a sort of rose-leaf fairy prince.

"Are we on the road?" asked Sheila presently.

Thatcher gave way to mirth. "Don't it seem like a road to you?"

SHE lurched against him, then saved herself from falling out at the other side by a frantic clutch.

"Is it a road?" She looked down a dizzy slope of which the horses' foothold seemed to her the most precarious part.

"Yes'm—all the road there is. We call it that. We're kind of po-lite to these little efforts of the government—kind of want to encourage 'em. Congressmen kind of needs coaxin' and flat'ry. They're right ornery critters. I heard an argyment atween a feller with a hoss and a feller with a mule onct. The mule feller was kind of uppish about hosses, said he didn't see the advantage of the critter. A mule, now, was steady and easy fed and strong—well, ma'am, the hoss-feller got kind of hot after some of this, so he says, 'Well, sir,' he says, 'there's this about it: When you got a hoss, you got a hoss. You know what you got. He's goin' to act like a hoss. But when you got a mule, why, you can't never tell. All of a sudden one of these days he's like as not to turn into a congressman.' Well, ma'am, that's the way we feel about congressmen. Ho, there, Monkey! Keep up. I'll just get out an' hang on the wheel while we make this

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A rattle of galloping hoofs struck the ground behind them. Two riders wheeled and stopped.

corner. That'll keep us from turnin' over, I reckon."

Sheila sat and held on with both hands. Her eyes were wide and very bright. She held her breath till Thatcher got in again, the corner safely made. For the next creeping, lurching mile, Sheila found that every muscle in her body had its use in keeping her on that seat. Then they reached the snow, and matters grew definitely worse. Here half the road was four feet of dirty, icy drift and half of abysmal mud. They slipped from drift to mire with awful perils and rackings of the wagon, and painful struggles of the team. Sometimes the snow softened and let the horses in up to their necks, when Thatcher plied his whip with necessary cruelty.

At last there came disaster. They were making one of those heart-stopping turns. Sheila had got out and was adding her mosquito weight to Thatcher's on the upper side, half-walking, half-hanging to the wagon. The outer wheels were deep in mud, the inner wheels hung clear. The horses strained—and slipped.

"Let go!" shouted Thatcher.

SHEILA fell back into the snow and the wagon turned quietly over and began to slide down the slope. Thatcher sprang to his horses' heads. For an instant it seemed that they would be dragged over the edge. Then the wagon stopped, and Thatcher, grim and pale, unhitched his team. He swore fluently under his breath during this entire operation. Afterward he turned to the scarlet and astounded passenger and gave her one of his shining smiles.

"Well, ma'am," he said, beginning to roll a cigaret—"What do you think of that?"

"Whatever shall we do now?" asked Sheila. She had identified herself utterly with this team, this load, this driver. She brushed the snow from her skirt, climbed down from the drift to the edge of the mire by Thatcher's elbow. The team stood with hanging heads, panting and steaming, glad of the rest and the release.

"Well, ma'am," said Thatcher, looking down at the loyal, anxious face with a certain tenderness, "I'm a-goin' to do one of two things. I'm a-goin' to lead my team over the hill and come back with two more hosses and a hand to help me, or I'm a-goin' to set here and wait for the stage."

"How long will it be before the stage comes?"

"Matter of four or five hours."

"Oh, dear! Then I can't possibly overtake my—my friend, Miss Blake!"

"No, ma'am. But you can walk on a quarter-mile and take a rest at Duff's place top of the hill. I can pick you up when I come by. Like as not I'll spend the night at Duff's. By the time I get my load together it'll be along dark— Hullo!" He interrupted himself, lifting his chin. "I hear hosses now."

They both listened.

"No wagon," said Thatcher.

Five minutes later a slouching horseman, cigaret in mouth, shaggy chaps on long legs, spurred and booted and decorated with a red neck-scarf, came picturesquely into view. His pony dug sturdy feet into the steep roadside, avoiding the mud of the road itself. The man led two other horses, saddled but empty of riders. He stopped, and between him and Thatcher took place one of the immensely tranquil, meditative and deliberate conversations of the Far West.

Sheila's quick Celtic nerves tormented her. At last she broke in with an inspiration. "Couldn't I hire one of your horses?" she asked, rising from an overturned sack of which she had made a resting-place.

THE man looked down at her with grave, considerate eyes.

"Why, yes, ma'am. I reckon you could," he said gently. "They're right gentle ponies," he added.

"Are they yours?"

"One of them is. The other belongs to Kearney, dude-wrangler up the valley. But say, if you're goin' to Rusty you could leave my hoss at Lander's and I c'd get him when I come along. I am stopping here to help with the load. It would cost you nothin', lady. The hoss has got to go over to Rusty and I'd be pleased to let you ride him. You're no weight."

"How good of you!" said Sheila. "I'll take the best care of him I know how to take. Could I find my way? How far is it?"

"All down-hill after a half-mile, lady. You could make Rusty afore dark. It's a whole lot easier on hoofs than it is on wheels. You can't miss the road on account of it bein' the only road there is. And Lander's is the only one hotel in Rusty. You'd best stop the night there."

He evidently wanted to ask her destination, but his courtesy forbade.

Sheila volunteered: "I am going to Miss Blake's ranch up Hidden Creek."

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A sort of flash of surprise passed across the reserved, brown, young face. "Yes, ma'am," he said with no expression. "Well, you better leave the rest of your trip until to-morrow."

He slipped from his horse with an effortless ripple, untied a tawny little pony with a thick neck, a round body and a mild, intelligent face, and led him to Sheila, who mounted from her sack. Thatcher carefully adjusted the stirrups, a primitive process that involved the wearisome lacing and unlacing of leather thongs. Sheila bade him a bright and adventurous "Good-by," thanked the unknown owner of the horse, and started. The pony showed some unwillingness to leave his companions, fretted and tossed his head and made a few attempts at a right-about face, but Sheila dug in her small spurred heels and spoke beguilingly. At last he settled down to sober climbing. Sheila looked back and waved her hand. The two tall lean men were gazing after her. They took off their hats and waved. She felt a warmth that was almost loving for their gracefulness and gravity and kindness. Here was another breed of man than that produced by Millings. A few minutes later she came to the top of the pass and looked down into Hidden Creek.

CHAPTER TWO

Adventure

SHEILA stood and drew breath. The shadow of the high peak in the lap of which she stood poured itself eastward across the warm, lush, narrow land. This was different from the hard dull gold and alkali dust of the Millings country: here were silvery-green miles of range and purple-green miles of pine forest and lovely lighter fringes and groves of cottonwood and aspen trees. Here and there were little dots of ranches, visible more by their vivid oat and alfalfa fields than by their small log cabins. Down the valley the river flickered, lifted by its brightness above the hollow that held it, till it seemed just hung there like a string of jewels.

Beyond the land rose slowly in noble sweeps to the opposite ranges, two chains that sloped across each other in a glorious confusion of heads, round and soft as velvet against the blue sky, or blunt and broken with a thundery look of extinct craters. To the north Sheila saw a further serenity of mountains, lying low and soft on the horizon, of another and more wistful blue. Over it all was a sort of magical haze, soft and brilliant as though the air were a melted sapphire.

There was still blessedness such as Sheila had never felt. She was filled with a longing to ride on and on until her spirit should pass into the wide tranquil spirit of the lonely land. It seemed to her that some forgotten medicine man sat cross-legged in a hollow of the hills, blowing from a great peace-pipe the blue smoke of peace down and along the hollows and the cañons and the level lengths of range. In the mighty breast of the blower there was not even a memory of trouble, only a noble savage serenity too deep for prayer.

She rode for a long while, hearing no sound but her pony's hoofs, her eyes lifted across the valley, until a sudden fragrance drew her attention earthward. She was going through an open glade of aspens and the ground was white with columbine—enormous flowers, snowy and crisp as though freshly starched by fairy laundresses. With a cry of delight Sheila jumped off her horse, tied him by his reins to a tree, and began gathering flowers with all the concentration of a six-year-old.

Like all the flower gatherers of fable from Proserpina down, she found herself the victim of disaster. When she came back to the road with a useless, already perishing, mass of white, the pony had disappeared. Her knot had been unfaithful. Quietly that mild-nosed, pensive-eyed, round-bodied animal had pulled himself free and tip-toed back to join his friends.

Sheila hurried up the road towards the summit she had so recently crossed, till the altitude forced her to stop with no breath in her body and a pounding redness before her eyes. She stamped her feet with vexation. She longed to cry. She remembered confusedly but with a certain satisfaction some of the things Thatcher had said to his team. An entire and sudden lenience towards the gentle art of swearing was born in her. She threw her columbine angrily away. She had come so far on her journey that she would never be able to get back to Thatcher, nor even to Duff's shanty, before dark. And how far down still the valley lay, with that shadow widening and lengthening across it!

Her sudden loneliness descended upon her with an almost audible rush. Dusk at this height—dusk with a keen smell of glaciers and wind-stung pines, dusk with the world nine thousand feet below, and about her this falling away of mountainside, where the trees seemed to slant and the very flowers to be outrun by a mysterious sort of flight of rebel earth toward space! The great and heady height was filled with a presence which, if not hostile, was terrifyingly ignorant of man. There was some one not far away, she felt—just above there behind the rocky ridge, just back there in the confusion of purplish darkness streaked by pine-tree columns, just below in the thicket of the stream, some one to meet whose look meant death.

HER first instinct was to keep to the road. She walked on down towards the valley very rapidly. But going down meant meeting darkness. She began to be unreasonably afraid of the night. She was afflicted by an old, old childish immemorial dread of bears. In spite of the chill she was very warm, her tongue dry with rapid breathing of the thin air. She was intolerably thirsty. The sound of water called to her in a lisping inhuman voice. She resisted till she was ashamed of her cowardice, stepped furtively off the track, scrambled down a slope, parted some branches and found herself on a rock above a little swirling pool. On the other side a man, kneeling over the water, lifted a white and startled face.

Through the eery-green twilight up into which the pool threw a shifty leaden brightness, the two stared at each other for a moment. Then the man rose to his feet and smiled. Sheila noticed that he had been bathing a bloody wrist round which he was now clumsily wrapping a handkerchief.

"Don't be frightened," he said in a rather uncertain voice. "I'm not near so desperate as I look. Do you want a drink? Hand me down your cup if you have one, and I'll fill it for you."

"I'm not afraid now," Sheila quavered and drew a big breath. "But I was startled for a minute. I haven't any cup. I—I suppose, in a way—I'm lost."

He was peering at her now, and when she took off her hat and rubbed her damp forehead with a weary worried gesture, he gave a little exclamation and swung himself across the stream by a branch, and up to her side on the rock.

"The barmaid!" he said. "And I was coming to see you!"

Sheila laughed in the relieved surprise of recognition. "Why, you are the cowboy—the one that fought so—so terribly. Have you been fighting again? Your wrist is hurt. May I tie it up for you?"

He held out his arm silently and she tied the handkerchief, a large clean coarse one, neatly about it. What with weariness and the shock of her fright, her fingers were not very steady. He looked down at her during the operation with a contented expression. It seemed that the moment was filled for him with satisfaction to a complete forgetfulness of past or present annoyances.

"This is a big piece of luck for me," he said. "But"—with a sudden thundery change of countenance, "you're not going over to Hidden Creek, are you?"

"I'm trying to go there," said Sheila. "I've been trying ever since five o'clock this morning. But I don't seem to be getting there very fast. I wanted to make Rusty before dark. And my pony got away from me and went back. I know he went back because I saw the marks of his feet, and he *would* have gone back. Wouldn't he? Do you think I could get to Rusty on foot to-night?"

"No, ma'am. I know you couldn't. You could make it easy on horseback, though." He stared meditatively above her head and then said in a tone of resignation—"I believe I'd better go back myself. I'll take you."

She had finished her bandage. She looked up at him. "Go back? But you must have just started from there a few hours ago."

"Well, ma'am, I didn't come very direct. I kind of shifted round. But I can go back straight. And I'd really rather. I think I'd better. It was all foolishness my coming over. I can put you up back of me on my horse, if you don't mind, and we'll get to Rusty before it's lit up. I'd rather. You don't mind riding that way, do you? You see, if I put you up and walked, it'd take lots more time."

"I don't mind," said Sheila, but she said it rather proudly, so that Hilliard smiled. "Well, ma'am, we can try it anyway. If you go back to the road, I'll get my horse."

HE SEEMED to have hidden his horse in a density of trees a mile from the road. Sheila waited till she thought she must have dreamed her meeting with him. He came back looking a trifle sheepish.

"You see," he said, "I didn't come by the road, ma'am."

The horse was a large bony animal with a mean eye.

"That isn't the pony you rode when you came to Millings," said Sheila.

He bent to examine his saddle girth. "No, ma'am," he said gently. "I've been

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Sheila fell, and felt, just before she dropped into blackness, that she had been saved by firm arms from falling to the ground.

riding quite a variety of horse-flesh lately. I'll get on first if you don't mind, and give you a hand up. You put your foot on mine. The horse will stand."

SHEILA obeyed, pressing her lips tight, for she was afraid. However his long, supple fingers closed over her wrist like steel and she got quickly and easily to her perch and clung nervously to him.

"That's right. Put your arms round tight. Are you all fixed?"

"Y-yes."

"And comfortable?"

"Y-yes, I think so."

"We're off, then."

They started on a quick steady walk down the road. Once, Cosme loosened the six-shooter on his hip. He whistled incessantly through his teeth. Except for this, they were both silent.

"Were you coming to Millings?" asked Sheila at last. She was of the world where silence has a certain oppressive significance. She was getting used to her peculiar physical position and found she did not have to cling so desperately. But in a social sense she was embarrassed. He was quite impersonal about the situation, which made matters easier for her. Now and then she suppressed a frantic impulse to giggle.

"Yes, ma'am. To see you," he answered. "I never rightly thanked you." She saw the back of his neck flush and she blushed too, remembering his quickly diverted kiss which had left a smear of blood across her fingers. That had happened only a few days before, but they were long days. He too must have been well-occupied. There was still a bruise on his temple. "I—I wasn't quite right in the head after those fellows had beat me up, and I kind of wanted to show you that I am something like a gentleman."

"Have you been in Hidden Creek?"

"Yes, ma'am. I was thinking of prospecting around. I meant to homestead over there. I like the country. But when it comes to settling down I get kind of restless. And usually I get into a mix-up that changes my intentions. So I'd about decided to go back down Arizona way and work. Where are you going to stay in Hidden Creek?" he asked. "Where's your stuff?"

"Mr. Thatcher has it in his wagon. I'm going to Miss Blake's ranch. She invited me."

"Miss Blake? You mean the lady that wears pants? You don't mean it! Well, that's right amusing." He laughed.

Sheila stirred angrily. "I can't see why it's amusing."

He sobered at once. "Well, ma'am, maybe it isn't. No, I reckon it isn't. How long will you stay?"

Sheila gave a big sobbing sigh. "I don't know. If she likes me and if I'm happy, I'll stay there always." She added with a queer dazed realization of the truth—"I've nowhere else to go."

"Haven't you any—folks?" he asked.

"No."

"Got tired of Millings?"

"Yes—very."

"I don't blame you! It's not much of a town. You'll like Hidden Creek. And Miss Blake's ranch is a mighty pretty place, lonesome but wonderfully pretty. Right on a bend of the creek, way up the valley, close under the mountains. But can you stand loneliness, Miss? What *is* your name?"

THERE were curious breaks in his manner of a Western cowboy, breaks that startled Sheila, like little echoes from her life abroad and in the East. There was a quickness of voice and manner, an impatience, a hot and nervous something, and his voice and accent suggested training. The abrupt question, for instance, was not in the least characteristic of a Westerner.

"My name is Sheila Arundel. I don't know yours, either."

"Do you come from the East?"

"Yes. From New York." He gave an infinitesimal jerk. "But I've lived abroad nearly all my life. I think it would be politer if you would answer my question now."

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She felt that he controlled an anxious breath. "My name is Hilliard," he said, and he pronounced the name with a queer bitter accent, as though the taste of it were unpleasant to his tongue. "Cosme Hilliard. Don't you think it's a—*nice* name?"

For half a second she was silent, then she spoke with careful unconsciousness. "Yes. Very nice and very unusual. Hilliard is an English name, isn't it? Where did the Cosme come from?"

It was well done, so well that she felt a certain tightening of his body relax, and his voice sounded fuller. "That's Spanish. I've some Spanish blood. Here's Buffin's ranch. We're getting down."

SHEILA was remembering vividly: Sylvester had come into her compartment. She could see the rolling Nebraskan country slipping by the window of the train. She could see his sallow fingers folding the paper so that she could conveniently read a paragraph. She remembered his gentle pensive speech. "Ain't it funny, though, those things happen in the slums and they happen in the smart set, but they don't happen near so often to just middling folks like you and me? Don't it sound like a tenderloin tale though, South American wife and American husband and her getting jealous and up and shooting him? Now if it had been poor folks, why, they'd have hardly missed a day's work, but just because these Hilliards have got spondulix, they'll run a paragraph about 'em in the papers for a month."

Sheila began to make comparisons: a South American wife and an American husband, and here, this young man with the Spanish-American name and the Spanish-Saxon physique, and a voice that showed training and faltered over the pronouncing of the "Hilliard" as though he expected it to be too well remembered.

Had there been some mention in the paper of a son? A son in the West? A son under a cloud of some sort? But—she checked her spinning of romance—this youth was too genuine a cowboy, the way he rode, the way he moved, his phrases, his turn of speech! With all that wealth behind him how had he been allowed to grow up like this?

No, her notion was unreasonable, almost impossible. Although dismissed, it hung about her mental presentment of him, however, like a rather baleful aura, not without fascination to a seventeen-year-old imagination. So busy was she with her fabrications that several miles of road slipped by unnoticed. There came a strange confusion in her thoughts. It seemed to her that she was arguing the Hilliard case with some one. Then with a horrible start she saw that the face of her opponent was Sylvester's, and she pushed it violently away——

"Don't you go to sleep," said Hilliard softly, laughing a little. "You might fall off."

"I—I was asleep," Sheila confessed, in confusion at discovering that her head had dropped against him. "How dark it's getting! We're in the valley, aren't we?"

"Yes, ma'am, we're most there." He hesitated. "Miss Arundel, I think I'd best let you get down just before we get to Rusty."

"Get down? Why?"

He cleared his throat, half-turning to her. In the dusky twilight that was now very nearly darkness, his face was troubled and ashamed, like the face of a boy who tries to make little of a scrape. "Well, ma'am, yesterday the folks in Rusty kind of lost their heads. They had a bad case of Sherlock Holmes. I bought a horse up the valley from a chap who was all-fired anxious to sell him, and before I knew it I was playing the title part in a man-hunt. It seems that I was riding one of a string this chap had rustled from several of the natives. They knew the horse, and that was enough for their nervous systems.

"They had never set eyes on me before, and they wouldn't take my word for my blameless past. They told me to keep my story for trial when they took me over to the court. Meanwhile they gave me a free lodging in their pen. Miss Arundel—" Hilliard dropped his ironic tone and spoke in a low tense voice of childhood horror. His face stiffened and paled. "That was awful. To be locked in. Not to be able to get fresh breath in your lungs. Not to be able to go where you please, when you please. I can't tell you what it's like—I can't stand it. I can't stand a minute of it. I was in that pen six hours. I felt I'd go loco if I was there all night. I guess I am a kind of fool. I broke jail early in the morning and caught up the sheriff's horse. They got a shot or two at me, hit my wrist, but I made my getaway. This horse sure can get over the sage-brush. I was coming over to see you."

There was that in his voice when he said this that touched Sheila's heart profoundly. This restless, violent young adventurer, homeless, foot-loose, without discipline or duty, had turned to her in his trouble as instinctively as though she had been his mother. This, because she had once served him. Something stirred in Sheila's heart. "And then," Hilliard went on, "I was going to get down to Arizona. But, when I heard you were coming over into Hidden Creek, it seemed like foolishness to cut myself off from the country by running away from nothing. Of course there are ways to prove my identity with those fellows. It only means putting up with a few days of pen." He gave a sigh. "But you can understand, ma'am, that this isn't just the horse that will give you the quietest entrance into Rusty, and that I'm not just one of the first citizens."

"BUT," said Sheila, "if they see you riding in with me they certainly won't shoot."

He laughed admiringly. "You're game!" he said. "But, Miss Arundel, they're not likely to do any more shooting. It's not a man riding into Rusty that they're after. It's a man riding out of Rusty. They'll know I'm coming to give myself up."

"I'll just stay here," said Sheila firmly.

"I can't let you."

"I'm too tired to walk. I'm too sleepy. It'll be all right."

"Then I'll walk." He pulled in his horse, but at the instant stiffened in his saddle and wheeled about on the road. A rattle of galloping hoofs struck the ground behind them. Two riders wheeled and stopped. One drew close and held out his hand.

"Say, stranger, shake," he said. "We've been kickin' up the dust to beg your pardon. We got the real rustler this mornin' shortly after you left. I'm plum' disgusted and disheartened with young Tommins for losin' his head an' shootin' off his gun. He's a dern fool, that kid, a regular tenderfoot. Nothin' won't ever cure him, short of growin' up. Comes from Chicago, anyway. One of them Eastern towns. I see he got you, too."

"Winged me," smiled Hilliard. "Well, I'm right pleased I won't have to spend another night in your pen."

"You're entered for drinks. The sheriff stands 'em." Here he bowed to Sheila, removing his hat.

"This lady," Hilliard performed the introduction, "lost her horse on the Hill. She's aiming to stop at Rusty for to-night."

The man who had spoken turned to his silent companion. "Ride ahead, Shorty, why don't you?" he said indignantly—"and tell Mrs. Lander there's a lady that'll want to sleep in No. 5."

The other horseman after a swift searching look at Sheila said "Sure," in a very mild, almost cooing, voice and was off. It looked to Sheila like a runaway. But the men showed no concern.

They jogged companionably on their way. Fifteen minutes later they crossed a bridge and pulled up before a picket fence and a gate.

They were in Rusty.

CHAPTER THREE

Journey's End

THE social life of Rusty, already complicated by the necessity it was under of atoning for a mistake, was almost unbearably discomposed by the arrival of a lady. This was no light matter, be it understood. Hidden Creek was not a resort for ladies; and so signal an event as the appearance of a lady, a young lady, a pretty young lady, demanded effort.

But Rusty had five minutes for preparation. By the time Hilliard rode up to Lander's gate a representative group of citizens had gathered there. One contingent took charge of Hilliard—married men, a little unwilling, and a few even more reluctant elders—and led him to the bowl of reparation which was to wash away all memory of his wrongs. The others escorted Sheila up the board walk to the porch of hospitality filled by the massive person of Mrs. Lander.

On that brief walk Sheila was fathered, brothered, grandfathered, husbanded and befriended, and on the porch, all in the person of Mrs. Lander, she was mothered, sistered and grandmothered. Up the stairs to Number Five she was "eased"—there is no other word to express the process—and down again she was eased to supper, where in a daze of fatigue she ate with surprising relish tough fried meat and large wet potatoes, a bowl of raw canned tomatoes and a huge piece of heavy-crusted preserved peach pie. She also drank with no effect upon her drowsiness an enormous thick cupful of coffee, tempered by canned milk.

She sat at the foot of the long table opposite Mr. Lander, a fat, sly-looking man whose eyes twinkled with a look of mysterious inner amusement, caused probably by astonishment at his own respectability. He had behind him a career of unprecedented villainy, and that he should end here at Rusty as the solid and well-considered keeper of the roadhouse was, no doubt, a perpetual tickle to his consciousness.

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Down either side of the table were figures busy with their food. Courteous and quiet they were, and uninquiring except in the matter of her supplies. The yellow lamplight shone on brown-bearded and brown clean-shaven faces, rugged and strong and clean cut. These bared throats and thickly thatched heads, these faces, lighted by extraordinary, far-seeing, brilliant, brooding eyes, reminded Sheila of a master's painting of "The Last Supper"—so did their coarse clothing melt into the gold-brown shadows of the room, and so did their hands and throats and faces pick themselves out in mellow lights and darknesses.

AFTER the meal she dragged herself upstairs to Number Five, made scant use of nicked basin, spoutless pitcher and rough clean towel, blew out her little shadeless lamp and crept in under an immense elephantine grateful weight of blankets and patchwork quilts, none too fresh probably, though the sheet blankets were evidently newly washed. Of muslin sheeting there was none. The pillow was flat and musty. Sheila cuddled into it as though it had been a mother's shoulder. That instant she was asleep.

Once in the night she woke. A dream waked her. It seemed to her that a great white flower had blossomed in the window of her room and that in the heart of it was Dickie's face, tender and as pale as a petal. It drew near to her and bent over her wistfully. She held out her arms with a piteous longing to comfort his wistfulness, and woke. Her face was wet with the mystery of dream tears. The flower dwindled to a small white moon high in the upper pane of one of the uncurtained windows.

The room was full of eager mountain air. Sheila could hear a wheel turning with a soft splash in the stream below. There was no other sound. The room smelt of snowy heights and brilliant stars. She breathed deep, and quite as though she had breathed a narcotic, slept suddenly again. This, before any memory of Hudson burned her consciousness.

The next morning she found that her journey had been carefully arranged. Thatcher had come and gone. The responsibility for her further progress had been shifted to the shoulders of a teamster whose bearded face, except for the immense humor and gallantry of his gray eyes, was startlingly like one of Albrecht Dürer's apostles. Her bundle was in his wagon, half of his front seat was cushioned for her. After breakfast she was again escorted down the board walk to the gate. Mrs. Lander fastened a huge bunch of sweet peas to her coat and kissed her.

Sheila bade innumerable good-bys, expressed innumerable thanks. For Hilliard's absence Rusty offered its apologies. They said that he had been much entertained, and after the hurt he had suffered to his wrist late sleep was a necessity. Sheila understood. The bowl of reparation had been emptied to its last atoning dregs. She mounted to the side of "St. Mark," she bowed and smiled, made promises, gave thanks again, and waved herself out of Rusty at last. She had never felt so flattered and so warmed at heart.

"I'm a-goin'," quoth St. Mark, "right clost to Miss Blake's. If we don't overtake her—and that hoss of hers sure travels wonderful fast, somethin' wonderful, yes, ma'am, by God—excuse me, lady—it's sure surprisin' the way that skinny little hoss of hers will travel—why, I c'n take you acrost the ford. There ain't no way of gettin' into Miss Blake's exceptin' by the ford. And then I c'n take my team back to the road. From the ford it's a quarter-mile walk to Miss Blake's house. You c'n cache your bundle and she'll likely get it for you in the mornin'. We had ought to be there by sundown. Her trail from the ford's clear enough. I'm a-takin' this lumber to the government bridge forty mile up. Yes, by God—excuse *me*, lady—it's a-goin' to be just a dandy bridge until the river takes it out next spring, by God—you'll have to excuse me again, lady."

He seemed rather mournfully surprised by the frequent need for these apologies. "It was my raisin', lady," he explained. "My father was a Methody preacher. Yes'm, he sure was, by God, yes (excuse me again, lady). He was always a-prayin'. It kinder got me into bad habits. Yes, ma'am. Those words you learn when you're a kid, they do stick in your mind. By God, yes, they do (excuse *me*, lady). That's why I run away. I couldn't stand so much prayin' all the time. And bein' licked when I wasn't bein' prayed at. He sure licked me, that dern son of a—oh, by God, lady you'll just hev to excuse me, please." He wiped his forehead. "I reckon I better keep still."

Sheila struggled, then gave way to mirth. Her companion after a doubtful look relaxed into his wide-bearded smile. After that, matters were on an easy footing between them, and the "excuse me, lady's" were left to her understanding.

They drifted, like a lurching vessel, through the long crystal day. Never before this journey into Hidden Creek had time meant anything to Sheila but a series of incidents, occupations or emotions; now first she understood the Greek impersonation of the dancing hours. She had watched the varying faces the day turns to those who fold their hands and still their minds to watch its progress. She had seen the gradual heightening of brilliance from dawn to noon, and then the fading out from that high white-hot glare through gold and rose and salmon and purple to the ashy lavenders of twilight, and so into gray, and the metallic glittering coldness of the mountain night. It was the purple hour when she said good-by to St. Mark on the far side of a swift and perilous ford.

She was left standing in the shadow of a mountain-side, while he rode away into the still golden expanse of valley beyond the leafy course of the stream. Hidden Creek had narrowed and deepened. It ran past Sheila now with a loud clapping and knocking at its cobbled bed, and with an over-current of noisy murmurs. The hurrying water was purple, with flecks of lavender and gold. The trees on its banks were topped with emerald fire where they caught the light of the sun.

THE trail to Miss Blake's ran along the river, on the edge of a forest of pines. At this hour they looked like a wall into which some magic permitted the wanderer to walk interminably. Sheila was glad that she did not have to make use of this wizard invitation. She cached her bundle, as St. Mark had advised, in a thicket near the stream, and walked resolutely forward along the trail. Not even when her pony had left her on the Hill had she felt so desolate or so afraid.

She could not understand why she was here on her way to the ranch of this strange woman. She felt astonished by her loneliness, by her rashness, by the

(Continued on page 78)

"RED DAPPLE"—Two splendid creatures lived and bloomed in amazing perfection on the Willasanna Range—Thérèse McFarland, the half-Spanish daughter of a rancher, and Red Dapple, a wild *pinto* stallion, whose brilliant satin coat flamed against the green of the prairies. A true lover of horses, Vingie Roe, tells a stirring story about a leader of the herd who never was conquered by man, and about his dramatic participation in a prairie girl's romance.

"THE SHANSI WOMAN"—Something new and intensely absorbing in the way of detective fiction is William J. Neidig's story of underworld intrigue, involving a ring of crooks with a daring and ingenious scheme for securing a twenty-million-dollar haul, of the complications caused by a woman's vindictive hate, and of the part played by a small-town newspaper man with a hobby for photography.

"A STRIP OF GREEN PAPER"—A forceful story, skilfully told by Frederick Orin Bartlett, of the conflict between a wealthy, hard-working father and his independent, pleasure-loving son. A painful difference of opinion, leading to an estrangement, brings out an unexpected revelation of character that vitally affects the happiness of both.

"POLLY WANTS A BACKER"—A delightfully humorous story told with snap and sparkle by Dorothy De Jagers, who records the joyous progress of Honey Kemp, interior decorator extraordinary and blonde beauty *par excellence*. Honey's passionate pursuit of "effects" to harmonize with an ambitious color scheme culminates in an eventful search for a parrot and the subjugation of an obstinate young man.

These four exceptionally fine stories will head the list of contributions to the August fiction number of EVERYBODY'S.

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Mary Wollaston

By Henry Kitchell Webster

Author of "The Real Adventure," "The White Arc," etc.

VII

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

The Terror

GRAHAM STANNARD made his well-meant but disastrous proposal to Mary at half-past five or so on a Friday afternoon. It was a little more than twenty-four hours later, just after dark on Saturday evening, that she came in, unheralded, more incredibly like a vision than ever, upon Anthony March in his secret lair above the grocery.

He was sitting at his work-table, scoring a passage in the third act of "The Dumb Princess" for the wood-wind choir, when her knock, faint as it was, breaking in upon the rhythm of his theme, caused his pen to leap away from the paper and his heart to skip a beat. But had it actually been a knock upon his door? Such an event was unlikely enough.

He uttered a tentative and rather incredulous "Come in" as one just awakened speaks, humoring the illusion of a dream.

But the door opened and the Dumb Princess stood there, pallid, wistful, just as she had looked before her true lover climbed the precarious ivy to her tower and tore away the spell that veiled her.

March sat there debating with himself—or so it seemed to him afterward; it was a matter of mere seconds, of course—why, since she was a vision, did she not look as she had on one of the occasions when he had seen her—the night of the Whitman songs; the blazing afternoon in the hayfield?

She was different to-night, and very clearly defined, in a plain little frock of dark blue—yet not quite what one ordinarily meant by dark blue—cut out in an unsoftened square around the neck, and a small hat of straw, the color of the warmer sort of bronze. These austerities of garb, dissociated utterly with all his memories, gave her a poignancy that was almost unbearable. Why had the vision of her come to him like that?

She smiled and spoke. "It is really I. I've come with a message for you."

UNTIL she spoke he could do nothing but stare as one would at a hallucinatory vision; but her voice, the first articulate syllable of it, brought him to his feet and drew him across the room to where she stood. He was almost suffocated by a sudden convulsion of the heart, half exultation, half terror. The exultation was accountable enough. The high gods had given him another chance. Why he should be terrified, he did not, at the time, know, but he was—from that very first moment.

He came to her slowly, not knowing what he was to do or to say. All his mental powers were for the moment quite in abeyance. But when he got within hands' reach of her it was given to him to take both of hers and stoop and kiss them. He'd have knelt to her had his knees ever been habituated to prayer. Then he led her to his big hollow-backed easy-chair which stood in the dormer where the breeze came in, changed its position a little and waited until, with a faintly audible sigh, she had let herself sink into it.

How tired she was! He had been aware of that the moment he touched her hands. Whatever her experience during the past days or weeks had been, it had brought her to the end of her powers.

He felt another pang of that unaccountable terror as he turned away toward his own work-table, and he put up an unaddressed prayer for spiritual guidance. It was a new humility for him. He moved his own chair a little nearer, but not close, and seated himself.

"I can conceive of no message"—they were the first words he had spoken, and his voice was not easily manageable—"no message that would be more than nothing compared with the fact that you have come." Rising again, he went on: "Won't you let me take your hat? Then the back of that chair won't be in the way."

It was certainly a point in his favor that she took it off and gave it to him without demur. That meant that there would be time; yet her very docility frightened him. She seemed quite relaxed now that her head could lie back against the leather cushion, and her gaze traveled about the dingy, littered room with a kind of tender inquisitiveness as if she were memorizing its contents.

He gazed at her, as her preoccupation gave him leave to do, until a gush of tears blinded his eyes, and he turned, blinking them away, to the untidy quires of score-paper which he had tried to choose instead. It could not be that it was too late to alter that choice. The terror, for a moment, became articulate. She believed that it was too late. That was why she had come.

SHE spoke reflectively. "It would be called an accident, I suppose, that I came. I wrote you, but there was more to the message than would go easily in a note, so I took it myself to your house. There was just a chance, I thought, that I'd find you there. I didn't find you, but I found Miss McArthur. That was the only thing about it that could be called accidental. Your mother and sister were worried about you. They said it had been much longer than such periods usually were since they had heard from you. So I left my note and was coming away. Miss McArthur said she would come with me and offered to drive me back to town. When we got into her car she said she thought she knew where you were and would take me to you. She did not say anything more nor ask any questions until she had stopped outside here at the curb, when she looked up and saw the lighted windows and said you were surely here. Then she pointed out the place in the dark where the stairs were, and told me how to find your door. She waited, though, to make sure, before she drove away. I heard her go."

He had no word to say in the little pause she made there. He felt the pulse beating in his temples and clutched with tremulous hands the wooden arms of his chair. Until she had mentioned Jennie McArthur's name it had not occurred to him to wonder how she had been enabled to come to him. It could only have been through Jennie, of course. Jennie was the only person who knew. But why had Jennie disclosed his secret (her own at the same time, he was sure; she never would have expected Mary's clear eyes even to try to evade the unescapable inference)? Why had she revealed to Mary, whom she had never seen before, a fact which she had guarded with so impregnable a loyalty all these many years?

THE STORY

WHEN the story opens, Mary Wollaston and her brother Rush are about to return—one from war work in New York, one from overseas—to their home in Chicago. During their time together in New York, Rush realizes Mary's nervous tension, but never glimpses the truth that, living alone in New York, she has been swept off her feet during the hectic period of 1917-1918.

Neither has been much at home since the marriage of their father, a distinguished surgeon, to Paula Carresford, a young and temperamental opera-singer. Paula has recently "discovered" Anthony March, an unusual piano-tuner who is also a composer of great promise, and it is to an atmosphere of considerable strain, caused by John Wollaston's jealousy both of March and of Paula's career, that Rush and Mary return. Doctor Wollaston gives a dinner in their honor, after which Paula sings some songs of March's, whom Mary meets for the first time that night. They find themselves at once drawn together in a remarkable mood of breathless understanding. A brilliant producer has heard the songs and that evening, despite her knowledge of Doctor Wollaston's jealousy, Paula accepts an offer to sing in the opera at High Forest the following summer. Her début is to be made in an opera written by March, but he is unable to rewrite it in accordance with her rather self-centered views. During this time Doctor Wollaston is taken ill and Paula loses all interest in everything else in her anxiety for her husband.

After Doctor Wollaston's recovery, Mary, with her aunt, visits Rush at the model farm which belongs to him and his friend Graham Stannard. Stannard asks Mary to marry him, and she promises to do so "if she can."

Mary and Paula spend the opera season in a little cottage near High Forest. After the brilliant success which Paula scores with the High Forest Opera, Doctor Wollaston joins her there, and all their differences are adjusted. Mary, during his visit, spends a few days with Rush and Stannard at the farm. Here she meets again Anthony March, who has stopped there during a walking trip through the country, and here he and Mary come to a realization of their love for each other. March, however, leaves suddenly, and Mary, returning to High Forest, is met in Chicago by her father's old friend, Wallace Hood, and learns from him of her father's precarious financial condition.

She tells this to Paula, who has just promised Dr. Wollaston to give up her operatic career. Paula, hoping to relieve her invalid husband of all financial burden, immediately signs a five-year contract. Mary, to avoid a part of the ensuing explosion, goes to Chicago to look for a position for herself. Graham Stannard calls upon her there and begs her again to be his wife. Mary, exhausted by the events of the past few days, tells him the real reason why she is unable to marry him.

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He knew now why he had been terrified from the moment she came into the room. He knew now why she had wrung that promise from him.

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The only possible answer was that Jennie had divined, under the girl's well-bred poise, the desperation which was terrifying him. It was no nightmare, then, of his own overwrought imagination. Jennie had perceived the emergency—the actual life-or-death emergency—and with courageous matter-of-fact inspiration had done, unhesitatingly, the one thing that could possibly meet the case. She had given him his chance. Jennie!

He arrived at that terminus just as Mary finished speaking. In the pause that followed she did not at first look at him. Her gaze had come to rest upon that abortive musical typewriter of his. Not quite in focus upon it, but as if in some corner of her mind she was wondering what it might be. But as the pause spun itself out, her glance, seeking his face, moved quickly enough to catch the look of astonishment that it wore. She read it—misread it, luckily—and her own lighted amazingly with a beam of pure amusement.

"I suppose it is rather overwhelming," she said; "a conjunction like that. I mean, that it should have been she who brought me here. But really, unless one accepts all the traditional motives and explanations that one finds in books, it shouldn't be surprising that she should undertake a friendly service for some one else she saw was fond of you, too. Not when one considers the wonderful person she is."

If his sheer adoration of her were enough to save her, then she was safe, whatever the peril. But he doubted if it would be enough.

"Jennie and I were lovers once," he said. "But that came to an end for both of us a good while ago. Two or three years. And the last time she came to this room, one day in April it was—I told her about you and about 'The Dumb Princess—'" he laid his hand upon the stack of manuscript; "this. I had come home from that night at your father's house when you and I had heard that song together, with my head full of it. I went nearly mad fighting it out of my head while I tried to make over that other opera for Paula."

"'The Dumb Princess'——"

He nodded. "You see, you hardly spoke that night, only at the end to say we mustn't talk. So I came away thinking of some one under a spell. A princess, the fairy sort of princess who could not speak until her true lover came to her. But instead of that I tried to go on working at that Belgian horror and stuck at it until it was unendurable. And then, when I came to the house to tell Paula so, it was you who came to me again, the first time since that night."

THERE had come a faintly visible color into her cheeks and once more she smiled, reflectively. "That's what you meant, then," she mused. "I couldn't make it out. You said just before you went away, 'That's why it was so incredible when you came down the stairs instead!'"

She had remembered that!

"I ran away," he confessed, "the moment I had said it, for fear of betraying myself. And I went to work on 'The Dumb Princess' that day."

"You've done all that, a whole opera, since the fourteenth of May?"

"I worked on it," he said, "until I had to stop for the little vacation that—that ended at Hickory Hill. And I came straight back to it from there. I've been working at it all the time since. Now, except for the scoring in the second and part of the third act, it's finished. I thought it was the thing I wanted more than anything else in the world—just to get it written down on paper; the thing which that moment with you up in that little anteroom started. I've pretty well done it. As far as the music itself is concerned, I think I have done it."

He paused there and pressed his lips together. Then he went on speaking, stiffly, one word at a time. "And I was saying to myself when you knocked that I would tear it up, every sheet of it and set it alight in the stove yonder if it would take me back to that hour we had together at Hickory Hill."

THE tenderness of her voice when she replied (it had some of the characteristic qualities of his beloved wood-winds) did not preclude a bead of humor, almost mischief, from gilding the salient points of its modeling.

"I know," she said. "I can guess what that feeling must be: the perfect emptiness and despair of having a great work done. I suspect there aren't many great masterpieces that one couldn't have bought cheap by offering the mess of pottage at the right moment. Oh, no, I didn't mean a sneer when I said 'cheap.' I really understand. That very next morning out in the orchard, thinking it over, I managed to be glad you'd gone—alone—your own ways, rather than back with me to High Forest. But—I'm glad I came to-night; and I'm glad I know about—'The Dumb Princess.'"

Watching her as her unfocused, reminiscent gaze made it easy for him to do, he saw her go suddenly pale, saw the perspiration bead out on her forehead as if some thought her mind had found itself confronting actually sickened her. He waited an instant, breathless in an agony of doubt whether to notice or to go on pretending to ignore. After a moment the wave passed.

"I know that was a figure of speech," she resumed—her voice was deadened a little in timbre, but its inflections were as light as before. "But I wish—I'd really be ever so much—happier—if you'd give me a promise; a perfectly serious, solemn—" she hesitated for a word and smiled—"death-bed promise, that you never will burn up 'The Dumb Princess.' At least until she's all published and produced. And I wish that as soon as you've got a copy made, you'd put this manuscript in a really safe place."

He turned away from her, baffled, bewildered. She had evaded the issue he had tried to confront her with. She had taken the passionate declaration of his wish to retrieve the great error of his life as a passing emotion familiar to all creative artists at certain stages in their work. It was a natural, almost inevitable, way of looking at it! He sat for a moment gazing abstractedly at his littered table, clutching the edges of it with both hands, resisting a momentary vertigo of his own.

Then he was aware of a look from her of quick concern. She left her chair and came and stood beside him. She picked up one of the quires of manuscript, opened it and gazed a while at the many-staved score. He was aware of a catch in her breathing, like an inaudible sob, but presently she spoke, quite steadily.

"I wish I could sit here to-night and read this. I wish it made even unheard melodies to me. I'm not dumb, but I am deaf to this. *There's* a spell beyond your power to lift, my dear."

She laid her hand lightly upon his shoulder and at her touch his taut-drawn muscles relaxed into a tremulous weakness. After a little silence:

"Now give me my promise," she said.

He did not immediately answer and the hand upon his shoulder took hold. Under its compulsion, "I'll promise anything you ask," he said.

She spoke slowly as if measuring her words. "Never to destroy this work of yours that you call 'The Dumb Princess' whatever conceivably may happen, however discouraged you may be about it."

"Very well," he said, "I won't."

"Say it as a promise," she commanded; "quite explicitly."

So he repeated a form of words which satisfied her. She held him tight in both hands for an instant. Then swiftly went back to her chair.

"Don't think me too foolish," she apologized. "I haven't been sleeping much of late and I couldn't have slept to-night with a misgiving like this to wonder about."

His own misgiving obscurely deepened. He did not know whether it was the reason she had offered for exacting that promise from him or the mere tone of her voice, which was lighter and more brittle than he felt it should have been. She must have read the troubled look in his face, for she said at once and on a warmer note:

"Oh, my dear, don't! Don't let my vagaries trouble you. Let me tell you the message I came with. It's about the other opera. They want to put it on at once up at High Forest, with Fournier as the officer and that little Spanish soprano as *Dolores*. Just as you wrote it; without any of the terrible things you tried to put in for Paula. It will have to be sung in French, of course, because neither of them sings English. They want you up there just as soon as you can come, to sign the contract and help with the rehearsals."

ONCE more with an utterly unexpected shift she left him floundering, speechless. He had forgotten "The Outcry," except for his nightmare efforts to revamp it for Paula; had charged it off his books altogether. What Mary had told him at Hickory Hill about her labors in its behalf had signified simply how rapturously delicious it was that she should have been so concerned for him. The possibility of a successful outcome to her efforts hadn't occurred to him.

She said, smiling with an amused tenderness over his confusion: "I haven't been too officious, have I?"

He knew he was being mocked at and he managed to smile, but he had to blink and press his hand to his eyes again before he could see her clearly.

"It's not astonishing that you can work miracles," he said. "The wonder would be if you could not."

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The door opened and the dumb princess stood there pallid and wistful.

"There was nothing in the least miraculous about this," she declared. "It wasn't done by folding my wings and weaving mystic circles with a wand. Besides making that translation—oh, terribly bad, I'm afraid—into French, I've cajoled and intrigued industriously for weeks, like one of those patient, wicked little spiders of Henri Fabre's. I found a silly flirtation between Fournier and a married woman I knew, and I encouraged it, helped it along and made it useful. I've used everybody I could lay hands on."

WHAT an instrument of ineffable delight that voice of hers was—its *chalumeau* tenderness just relieved with the sparkle of irony. But he was smitten now with the memory of his own refusal to go to High Forest so that Paula would remember him again. He blurted out something of his contrition over this, but she stopped him.

"It was only because I wanted you there. I would not for any conceivable advantage in the world have let you—oh, even touch these devices that I've been concerned with. But I've reveled in them myself; in doing them for you, even though I could not see that they were getting anywhere.

"Everything seemed quite at a standstill when I left High Forest Thursday, but on Thursday night the Williamsons dined with Mr. Kahn and went to the park with him; and they all went home with Father and Paula afterward; Fournier and LaChaise and James Wallace too; and everything happened at once. I got a note from Paula this morning, written yesterday, asking where my translation was, but not telling me anything. And as she wasn't at home when I telephoned to answer her question, I didn't know until tonight.

"But about six o'clock James Wallace telephoned from the park and told me about it. He wanted you found and sent to High Forest at once. Having wasted half the season and more, they're now quite frantic over the thought of losing a minute, and, Jimmie says, immensely enthusiastic. So all you have to do now is to go up there and lord it over them. You'll hear it sung; you'll hear the orchestra play it. You will make a beginning toward coming into your own, my dear, because even if you don't care for it as you did, it will be a step toward—the princess, won't it?"

She dropped back against the cushion as from weariness, and sudden tears brimmed into her eyes and spilled down her cheeks. He came to her at that, in spite of the gesture that would have held him away.

"You must believe—it's nothing—but happiness," she gasped.

He sat down upon the arm of the chair and a little timidly took her in his hands, caressed her eyes and her wet face until at last she met his lips in a long kiss and sank back quieted.

He stayed on the chair-arm, however, and their hands remained clasped through a recollecting silence. She said presently:

"There are two or three practical things for you to remember. You mustn't be irritated with Violet Williamson. She has let herself become a little more sentimental about Fournier than I think in the beginning she meant to be; and you may find her underfoot more than you like. You mustn't mind that. And you'll find a very friendly helper in James Wallace. There is something a little caustic about his wit, and he suspects musicians on principle; but he will like you and he's thoroughly committed to 'The Outcry.' He's a very good French scholar and where passages have to be changed, he'll be a present help."

He took her face in both his hands and turned it up to him. "Mary," he demanded, when their eyes met, "why are you saying good-by to me?"

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR
The Whole Story

THE shot told. The hurried, desperate look of panic with which she gazed at him and tried, tugging at his hands, to turn away, revealed to him that he had leaped upon the truth. Part of it, anyhow. He closed his eyes for an instant, for another unaddressed prayer that he might not falter nor let himself be turned aside until he had sounded the full depth of it.

When he looked at her again she had recovered her poise. "It was silly," she said, "to think that I could hide that from you. I am going away—to-morrow. For quite a long while."

"Are you going away physically? In the ordinary literal sense, I mean; or is it that you are just—going away from me?"

Once more it was as if a trap had been sprung upon her. But this time he ignored the gasp and the sudden cold slackness of

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the hands he held and went on speaking with hardly a pause.

"I asked that question, put it that way, thinking perhaps I understood and that I could make it easier for you to tell me." He broke off there for an instant to get his voice under control. Then he asked steadily: "Are you going to marry Graham Stannard?"

She gasped again, but when he looked at her there was nothing in her face at all, beyond an incredulous astonishment.

So there was one alternative shorn away; one that he had not conceived as more than a very faint possibility.

It was not into matrimony that her long journey was to take her. He pulled himself up with a jerk to answer—and it must be done smoothly and comfortably—the question she had just asked him. How in the world had he ever come to think of a thing like that?

"Why, it was in the air at Hickory Hill, those days before you came. And then Sylvia was explicit about it, as something every one was hoping for."

"Was that why you went away?" she asked with an intent look into his face. "Because he had a—prior claim, and it wouldn't be fair to—poach upon his preserves?"

He gave an ironic monosyllabic laugh. "I tried for the next few days to bamboozle myself into adopting that explanation, but I couldn't. The truth was, of course, that I ran away simply because I was frightened. Sheer panic terror of the thing that had taken hold of me. The thought of meeting you that next morning was—unendurable."

She, too, uttered a little laugh, but it sounded like one of pure happiness. She buried her face in his hands and touched each palm with her lips. "I couldn't have borne it if you'd said the other thing," she told him. "But I might have trusted you not to, because you're not a sentimentalist. You're almost the only person I know who is not."

She added, a moment later, with a sudden tightening of her grip upon his hands: "Have you discovered, too, that sentimentality is the cruelest thing in the world? It is. It is perfectly ruthless. It makes more tragedies than malice. Ludicrous tragedies—which are less endurable than any other sort. Unless one were enough of an Olympian so that he could laugh." She relaxed again and made a little nestling movement toward him. "I thought, for a while, of you that way."

HE MANAGED to speak as if the idea amused him. "As an Olympian? No, if I had a mountain it wouldn't be that one. But I like the valleys better anyhow."

"I know," she said contentedly. Then her face darkened. "I'm just at the beginning of you—now—" The sentence ended a little unnaturally, though he had done nothing to interrupt it.

Deliberately he startled her. "What time does your train go to-morrow? Or haven't you selected one? You haven't even told me where it is you are going."

Through his hands which held her he felt the shock, the momentary agony of effort to recover the threatened balance, the resolute relaxation of the muscles and the steadying breath she drew.

"Oh, there are plenty of trains," she said. "You mustn't bother. Why—Wallace Hood has a sister living in Omaha. (Wallace Hood, not James Wallace. It would be terrible if you confused them.) She's been trying for months to find a nursery governess. And I've been trying—perhaps you didn't know; the family have been very unpleasant about it—to find a job. Oh, for the most realistic of reasons, among others. Well, it occurred to me the other day that Wallace's sister and I might be looking for each other."

There she paused, but only for a moment. Then she added, very explicitly, "So I'm going to Omaha to-morrow."

Even her lying she had to do honestly. She preferred, he saw, that he should remember she had lied to having him recall that she had tricked him by an evasion.

ONE need not invoke clairvoyance to account for his incandescent certainty that she had lied. The mere unconscious synthesis of the things she had left unsaid along the earlier stages of their talk would have amounted to a demonstration. Her moment of panic over his discovery that she was saying good-by, her irrepressible shudder at the question whether she was going away in the ordinary literal sense of the phrase; finally, her pitiful attempt to avoid, in answer to his last question, a categorical untruth and then her acceptance of it as, after all, preferable to the other. But it was by no such pedestrian process as this that he reached the truth.

He knew now why he had been terrified from the moment she came into the room. He knew now why she had wrung that promise from him—a death-bed promise, she had dared, with a smile, to call it—that he would not, "whatever happened," destroy "The Dumb Princess." It would be a likely thing for him to do, she had perceived, when he learned that she had destroyed herself. She could not "sleep," she had told him, until that surmise was laid.

There were, as she had said, plenty of trains to that unknown destination of hers, but he thought that the word "sleep" covered the true clue. She was a doctor's daughter; there must be somewhere in that house a chest or cupboard that would supply what she needed. They'd find her in her own bed in that room he had once cast a glance into on his way up-stairs to Paula.

The conviction grew upon him that she had her plans completely laid; yes, and her preparations accomplished. That quiet leisureliness of hers would not have been humanly possible if either her resolution or the means for executing it had remained in doubt. It was likely that she had whatever it was (a narcotic; probably morphin; she wouldn't, conceivably, resort to any of the corrosives) upon her person at this moment, in that little silken bag which hung from her wrist.

He clenched the finger-nails into the palms of his hands. This thing was a nightmare. He had fallen asleep over his table; had only to wake himself. It would not do to play with an idea like that. Nor with the possibility that he had misread her mind. He knew. He was not mistaken. Let him never glance aside from that.

For one moment he thought wildly of trying to summon help from outside, of frustrating her design by sheer force. But that could not be done. As between them, he would be reckoned the madman. Her project might be deferred, perhaps. It could not be prevented.

It was that terrible self-possession of hers that gave the last turn to the screw. She could not be dealt with as one frantic, beside herself, to be wooed and quieted back into a state of sanity. She was at this moment as sane as he. She was not to be held back, either, by a mere assurance of his love for her. She had never, it appeared, lacked that assurance. But her life, warmed even as it was by their love, presented itself to her somehow as an *impasse;* as something that it was not possible to go on with.

This was very strange. All of its externals that were visible to him made up, one would have said, a pattern singularly gracious and untroubled. Buried in it somewhere there must be some toxic focus that poisoned everything. He must meet her on her own ground. He must show her another remedy than the desperate one she was now resolved upon. And before he could find the remedy he must discover the poison. The only clue he had was the thing she said about sentimentalists and the tragedies they caused. More tragedies than malice was responsible for. He thought she was probably right about that. It was some such tragedy, anyhow, ludicrous, unendurable, that had driven her to this acquiescence in defeat.

He said, in as even a tone as he could manage: "I asked about trains because I wondered whether there was anything to hurry you to-night. Packing to do or such a matter; whether we mightn't have a really leisurely visit. I haven't much idea what time it is, except that I don't think I've eaten anything since around the middle of the day. Have you? If you'd stay and have supper with me—but I suppose you're expected somewhere else."

SHE smiled dryly at this, then laughed at herself. "It happens rather funnily that I haven't been so little expected or looked after, since I came home from New York, as I am to-night. I'm not—in a hurry at all. I'll stay here as long as you like."

"Is that a promise?" he asked. "As long as I liked would be a long while."

"I'll stay," she added, "as long as I can see I'm making you happy. When I find myself beginning to be a—torment to you. I shall vanish."

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that his ghastly surmise was a produ
his own fatigue and sleepless nights.
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No, love must wait.

un-

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The Bands of Ballyguttery

By George A. Birmingham

Author of "Spanish Gold," "The Island Mystery," "Psalissa," etc.

THE Wolfe Tone Republican Club has its headquarters at Ballyguttery. Its members, as may be guessed, profess the strongest form of Nationalism. There are about sixty of them. The Loyal True-Blue Invincibles are an Orange Lodge. They also meet in Ballyguttery. There are between seventy and eighty Loyal Invincibles. There are also in the village ten adult males who are not members of either the club or the lodge. Six of these are policemen. The other four are feeble people of no account, who neglect the first duty of good citizens and take no interest in politics.

Early in September the Wolfe Tone Republicans determined to hold a demonstration. They wished to convince a watching world, especially the United States of America, that the people of Ballyguttery are unanimous and enthusiastic in the cause of Irish independence. They proposed to march through the village street in procession, with a band playing tunes in front of them, and then to listen to speeches made by eminent men in a field

The Loyal Invincibles heard of the intended demonstration. They could hardly help hearing of it, for the Wolfe Tone Republicans talked of nothing else, and the people of Ballyguttery, whatever their politics, live on friendly terms with each other and enjoy long talks about public affairs.

The Loyal Invincibles at once assembled and passed a long resolution, expressing their determination to put a stop to any Nationalist demonstration. They were moved, they said, by the necessity for preserving law and order, safeguarding life and property, and maintaining civil and religious liberty. No intentions could have been better than theirs; but the Wolfe Tone Republicans also had excellent intentions, and did not see why they should not demonstrate if they wished to. They invited all the eminent men they could think of to make speeches for them. They also spent a good deal of money on printing and placarded the walls round the village with posters, announcing that their demonstration would be held on September fifteenth, the anniversary of the execution of their patron Wolfe Tone by the English.

In fact Wolfe Tone was not executed by the English or any one else, and the date of his death was November the nineteenth. But that made no difference to either side, because no one in Ballyguttery ever reads history.

The Loyal True-Blue Invincibles did not tear down the posters. They were kindly men, averse to unneighborly acts. But they put up posters of their own, summoning every man of sound principles to assemble on September fifteenth at 10:30 A.M., in order to preserve law, order, life, property and liberty, by force if necessary.

Mr. Hinde, District Inspector of Police in Ballyguttery, was considering the situation. He was in an uncomfortable position, for he had only four constables and one sergeant under his command. It seemed to him that law and order would disappear for the time, life and property be in danger, and that he would not be able to interfere very much with anybody's liberty. Mr. Hinde was, however, a young man of naturally optimistic temper. He had lived in Ireland all his life, and he had a profound belief in the happening of unexpected things.

ON SEPTEMBER the tenth the Wolfe Tone Republicans made a most distressing discovery. Six months before, they had lent their band instruments to the Thomas Emmet Club, an important association of Nationalists in the neighboring village. The Thomas Emmets, faced with a demand for the return of the instruments, confessed that they had lent them to the Martyred Archbishops' branch of the Gaelic League. They, in turn, had lent them to the Manchester Martyrs' Gaelic Football Association. These athletes would, no doubt, have returned the instruments honestly; but unfortunately their association had been suppressed by the Government six weeks earlier and had only just been re-formed as the Irish Ireland National Brotherhood.

In the process of dissolution and reincarnation the band instruments had disappeared. No one knew where they were. The only suggestion the footballers had to make was that the police had taken them when suppressing the Manchester Martyrs. This seemed probable, and the members of the Wolfe Tone Republican Club asked their president, Mr. Cornelius O'Farrelly, to call on Mr. Hinde and inquire into the matter.

Mr. Hinde was surprised, very agreeably surprised, at receiving a visit one evening from the president of the Republican club. In Ireland leading politicians, whatever school they belong to, are seldom on friendly terms with the police. He greeted O'Farrelly warmly.

"What I was wishing to speak to you about was this—" O'Farrelly began.

"Fill your pipe before you begin talking," said Mr. Hinde. "Here's some tobacco." He offered his pouch as he spoke. "I wish I could offer you a drink; but there's no whisky to be got nowadays."

"I know that," said O'Farrelly in a friendly tone, "and what's more, I know you'd offer it to me if you had it."

He filled his pipe and lit it. Then he began again: "What I was wishing to speak to you about is the band instruments."

"If you want a subscription—" said Hinde.

"I do not want any subscription."

"That's just as well, for you wouldn't get it if you did. I've no money, for one thing; and besides it wouldn't suit a man in my position to be subscribing to rebel bands."

"I wouldn't ask you," said O'Farrelly. "Don't I know as well as yourself that it would be no use? And anyway it isn't the money we want, but our own band instruments."

"What's happened to them?" said Hinde. "You had a lot. Last time I saw your band it was fitted out with drums and trumpets enough for a regiment."

"It's just them that we're trying to get back."

"If any one has stolen them," said Hinde, "I'll look into the matter and do my best to catch the thief for you."

"Nobody stole them," said O'Farrelly; "not what you'd call stealing, anyway; but it's our belief that the police has them."

"You're wrong there," said Hinde. "The police never touched your instruments, and wouldn't."

"They might not if they knew they were ours. But from information received we think the police took them instruments the time they were suppressing the Manchester Martyrs beyond in Lisnan, the instruments being lent to them footballers at that time."

"I remember all about that business," said Hinde. "I was there myself. But we never saw your instruments. All we took away with us was two old footballs and a set of rotten goal-posts. Whatever happened to your instruments, we didn't take them. I expect," said Hinde, "that the Manchester Martyr boys pawned them."

O'FARRELLY sat silent. It was unfortunately quite possible that the members of the football club had pawned the instruments, intending, of course, to redeem them when the club funds permitted.

"I'm sorry for you," said Hinde. "It's awkward for you losing your drums and things just now, with this demonstration of yours advertised all over the place. You'll hardly be able to hold the demonstration, will you?"

"The demonstration will be held," said O'Farrelly firmly.

"Not without a band, surely. Hang it all, O'Farrelly, a demonstration is no kind of use without a band. It wouldn't be a demonstration. You know that as well as I do."

O'Farrelly was painfully aware that a demonstration without a band is a poor business. He rose sadly and said good night. Hinde felt really sorry for him.

"If the police had any instruments," he said, "I'd lend them to you. But we haven't a band of our own here. There aren't enough of us."

This assurance, though it was of no actual use, cheered O'Farrelly. It occurred to him that though the police had no band instruments to lend, it might be possible to borrow some elsewhere. The

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Loyal True-Blue Invincibles, for instance, had a very fine band, well supplied in every way, particularly with big drums. O'Farrelly thought the situation over and then called on Jimmy McLoughlin, the blacksmith, who was the secretary of the Orange Lodge.

"Jimmy," said O'Farrelly, "we're in trouble about the demonstration that's to be held next Tuesday."

"It'd be better for you," said Jimmy, "if that demonstration was never held. For let me tell you this: the Lodge boys has their minds made up to have no Papist rebels demonstrating here."

"It isn't you, nor your Orange Lodge, nor all the damned Protestants in Ireland, would be fit to stop us," said O'Farrelly.

JIMMY McLOUGHLIN spit on his hands as if in preparation for the fray. Then he wiped them on his apron, remembering that the time for fighting had not yet come.

"And what's the matter with your demonstration?" he asked.

"It's the want of instruments for the band that has us held up," said O'Farrelly. "We lent them, so we did, and the fellows that had them didn't return them."

Jimmy McLoughlin pondered the situation. He was as well aware as Mr. Hinde, as O'Farrelly himself, that a demonstration without a band is a vain thing.

"It would be a pity now," he said slowly, "if anything was to interfere with that demonstration, seeing as how you're ready for it and we're ready for you."

"It would be a pity. Leaving aside any political or religious differences that might be dividing the people of Ballyguttery, it would be a pity for the whole of us if that demonstration was not to be held."

"How would it be now," said Jimmy McLoughlin, "if we was to lend you our instruments for the day?"

"We'd be thankful to you if you did, very thankful," said O'Farrelly; "and indeed it's no more than I'd expect from you, Jimmy, for you always were a good neighbor. But are you sure that you'll not be wanting them yourselves?"

"We will not want them," said Jimmy McLoughlin. "It'll not be drums we'll be beating that day—not drums, but the heads of Papists. But mind what I'm saying to you now. If we lend you the instruments, you'll have to promise that you'll not carry them beyond the crossroads this side of Dicky's Brae. You'll leave the whole of them there at the crossroads, drums and all. It wouldn't do if any of the instruments got broke on us or the drums slit—which is what has happened more than once when there's been a bit of a fight. And it'll be at Dicky's Brae that we'll be waiting for you."

"I thought as much," said O'Farrelly, "and I'd be as sorry as you'd be yourself if any harm was to come to your drums. They'll be left at the crossroads the way you tell me. You may take my word for that. You can pick them up there yourselves and take them back with you when you're going home in the evening—those of you that'll be left alive to go home. For we'll be ready for you, Jimmy, and Dicky's Brae will suit us as well as any other place."

The Wolfe Tone Republicans are honorable men. Their band marched at the head of the procession through the streets of the village. They played all the most seditious tunes there are, and went on playing for half a mile outside the village. The police, headed by Mr. Hinde, followed them. At the crossroads there was a halt. The bandsmen laid down the instruments very carefully on a pile of stones beside the road. Then they took the fork of the road which leads southeastward.

The direct route to Dicky's Brae lies northwest along the other fork of the road. Cornelius O'Farrelly had the instinct of a military commander. His idea was to make a wide detour, march by a crossroad and take the Dicky's Brae position in the rear. This would require some time; but the demonstrators had a long day before them, and if the speeches were cut a little short no one would be any the worse.

Jimmy McLoughlin and the members of the Loyal True-Blue Invincibles sat on the roadside at the foot of Dicky's Brae and waited. They expected that the Wolfe Tone Republicans would reach the place about noon. At a quarter to twelve Mr. Hinde and five police arrived. They had with them a cart carefully covered with sacking. No one was in the least disturbed by their appearance. Five police, even with an officer at their head, can not do much to annoy two armies of sixty and seventy men.

The police halted in the middle of the road. They made no attempt to unload their cart.

AT HALF-PAST one Jimmy McLoughlin took counsel with some of the leading members of the Loyal True-Blue Invincible Lodge. It seemed likely that the Wolfe Tone Republicans had gone off to demonstrate in some other direction, deliberately shirking the fight which had been promised them.

"I'd never have thought it of Cornelius O'Farrelly," said Jimmy sadly. "I had a better opinion of him, so I had. I knew he was a Papist and a rebel and every kind of a blackguard, but I'd never have thought he was a coward."

While he spoke, a small boy came running down the hill. He brought the surprising intelligence that the Wolfe Tone Republicans were advancing in good order from a totally unexpected direction. Jimmy McLoughlin looked round and saw them. So did Mr. Hinde.

While Jimmy summoned his men from the ditches where they were smoking and the fields into which they had wandered, Mr. Hinde gave an order to his police. They took the sacking from their cart. Underneath it were all the band instruments belonging to the Orange Lodge. The police unpacked them carefully and then, loaded with drums and brass instruments, went up the road to meet the Wolfe Tone Republicans.

Jimmy McLoughlin ran to Mr. Hinde, shouting as he went:

"What are you doing with them drums?"

Mr. Hinde turned and waited for him.

"I'm going to hand them over to Cornelius O'Farrelly," he said.

"You're going to do nothing of the sort," said Jimmy, "for they're our drums, so they are."

"I don't know anything about that," said Mr. Hinde, "all I know is that they're the instruments which O'Farrelly's band were playing when they marched out of the town. They left them on the side of the road, where my men found them."

"What right had you to be touching them at all?" said Jimmy.

"Every right. O'Farrelly was complaining to me three days ago that one set of band instruments had been stolen from him. It's my business to see that he doesn't lose another set in the same way, even if he's careless enough to leave them lying about on the side of the road."

"Ain't I telling you that they're ours, not his?" said Jimmy.

"You'll have to settle that with him."

"Sure, if I settle it with him," said Jimmy, "in the only way anything could be settled with a pack of rebels, the instruments will be broke into smithereens before we're done."

This seemed very likely. Jimmy McLoughlin's bandsmen, armed with sticks and stones, were forming up on the road. The police had already handed over the largest drum to one of the leading Wolfe Tone Republicans. It was Cornelius O'Farrelly who made an attempt to save the situation.

He came forward and addressed Mr. Hinde. "It would be better," he said, "if you'd march the police off out of this and let them take the band instruments along with them, for if they don't the drums will surely be broke and the rest of the things twisted up so as nobody'll ever be able to blow a tune on them again, which would be a pity and a great loss to all parties concerned."

"I'll take the police away if you like," said Mr. Hinde, "but I'm hanged if I go on carting all those instruments about the country. I found them on the side of the road where you left them, and now that I've given them back to you I'll take no further responsibility in the matter."

The two sets of bandsmen were facing each other on the road. The instruments were divided between them. They were uttering the most bloodthirsty threats, and it was plain that in a minute or two there would be a scrimmage.

"Jimmy," said O'Farrelly, "if the boys gets to fighting——"

"I don't know," said Jimmy gloomily, "where the money's to come from to buy new drums."

"It might be better," said O'Farrelly, "if we was to go home and leave the instruments back safe where they came from before worse comes of it."

TEN minutes later the instruments were safely packed again into the cart. One of the Loyal True-Blue Invincibles led the horse. A Wolfe Tone Republican sat in the cart and held the reins. Jimmy McLoughlin and Cornelius O'Farrelly walked together. It was plain to every one that hostilities were suspended for the day.

"I'm thinking," said Jimmy, "that ye didn't hold your demonstration after all. I hope this'll be a lesson to you not to be trying anything of the sort for the future."

"For all your fine talk," said O'Farrelly, "you didn't stop us. And why not? Because you weren't fit to do it."

"We could have done it," said Jimmy, "and we would. But what's the use of talking? So long as no demonstration was held we're satisfied."

"So long as you didn't get interfering with us we're satisfied," said O'Farrelly.

Mr. Hinde, walking behind the procession with his five police, had perhaps the best reason of all for satisfaction.

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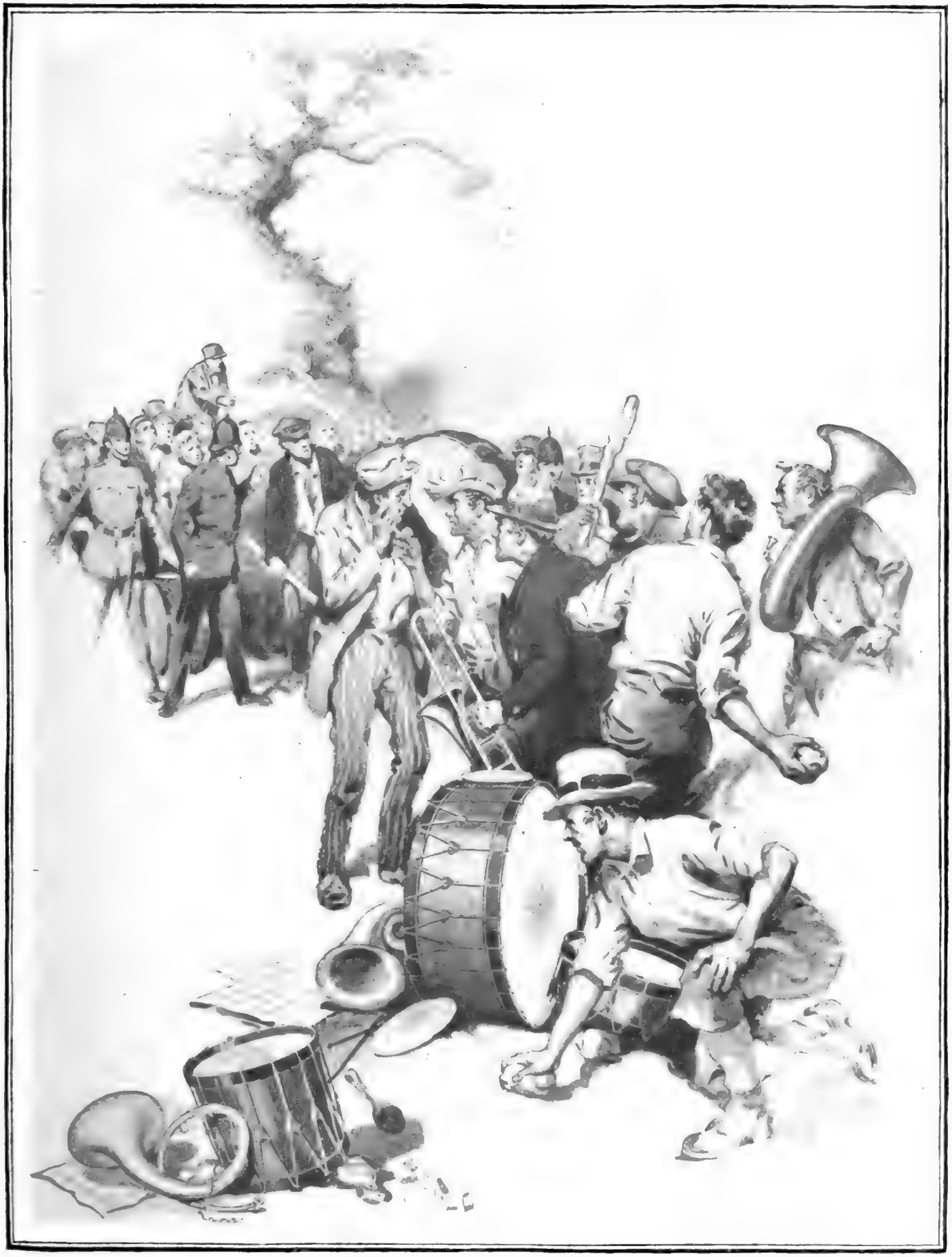

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AN EXASPERATED husband seeking a divorce on receiving an unfavorable verdict exclaimed: "We are not through with this case yet! Not by a long shot! I will take the matter to the District Court, to the State Supreme Court, and to the United States Supreme Court—and yes, by heck, if I lose there, I'll take it to the League of Nations!"

AN OLD lady, after waiting in a confectionery store for about ten minutes, grew grossly impatient at the lack of service.

Finally she rapped sharply on the counter.

"Here, young lady," she called, "who waits on the nuts?"

AMONG the stories prohibition has called forth is that of an old negro who was an incurable drunkard. One day a white man who took an interest in the old man asked him why he didn't try to straighten up and stop drinking.

"'Twouldn't do no good, Colonel, 'twouldn't do no good," the old darky insisted. "I inherited the taste fo' liquor. My father and mother wuz both bought in Africa, and paid fo' in rum."

A BRITISH consul, stationed in an African village, just after the outbreak of the war received the following telegram from his bureau chief: "War declared. Arrest all enemy aliens at once."

Two days later, the bureau chief was handed the following reply: "Have arrested two Frenchmen, a Dutchman, three Germans, two Americans, a Polander, three Russians and an Italian. Please tell me whom we are at war with?"

A YOUNG salesman who had been reared in the city, was traveling through the mountains of Virginia. On the top of a divide he met the star-route mail-carrier. "What time is it?" he asked.

Pulling out his watch, the mail-carrier deliberately replied:

"It's three o'clock by railroad time."

"By railroad time!" said the young man. "It looks to me like you people 'way back here in the mountains would use sun time!"

"What for, young man? We are a damned sight closer to the railroad than we are to the sun."

EDITOR'S NOTE—Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

A LAWYER whose arrogance often blunted his astuteness was proceeding with a cross-examination. "You say," he inquired of the witness, "that you have crossed the Atlantic seven times?"

"Yes, sir."

"And where were you born?"

"Here in New York."

"Then, sir," thundered the lawyer, "if you were born in New York and have crossed the Atlantic seven times, how does it happen that you aren't on the other side at this moment? Answer me that?"

"Well, sir," responded the little man on the stand, "you see, on my last trip I came home by way of Siberia and the Pacific Ocean."

AT A banquet given by a large body of educators the speaker of the evening arose, and began his address with the words: "Long live the teachers!"

He was interrupted by a tall emaciated young man who arose from the rear of the room and in a sepulchral voice queried: "On what?"

SHE was very stout and must have weighed nearly three hundred pounds. She was learning roller-skating, when she had the misfortune to fall. Several attendants rushed to her side, but were unable to raise her at once. One said soothingly:

"We'll get you up, all right, madam, don't be alarmed."

"Oh, I'm not alarmed at all; but your floor is so terribly bumpy."

And then from underneath came a feeble voice: "I am not a bump, I'm an attendant."

A WESTERN woman applied to the Chinese mission for a servant and was given a boy just over from China.

"Now, Sing," she explained, "I am going up-stairs to have my nap, and if anybody comes to see me, tell them I'm not in."

Sing could not understand. She was "not in," and yet she was in. So when a friend called he woke her up. This made her furious, and she speedily sent Sing back to the mission.

The Chinese employment agent urged her to give Sing another trial, saying that he was not used to American ways.

"Oh, you not angry with China boy," said he. "You keep him, you teach him, and bimeby he learn to lie just like Chlistian."

"OH, COME on," said the dog's young white master to the youthful son of Ham, "that dog won't bite you."

"How you know he won't?"

"He never has bitten anybody yet."

"Dat's it, you know what he ain't never done, but you don't know what he ain't *gwinter do*."

OLD Dwight walked down the main street of the village one morning, dressed in his best suit, with a large buttonhole bouquet, and cotton gloves on his hands.

"Why, Dwight," said the postman, "are you taking a holiday?"

"Dish yere am mah golden weddin', sah; Ah'm sallybratin' hit."

"But your wife," said the postman, "is working as usual. I saw her at the tub as I passed the house."

"Her?" said Dwight angrily. "She ain't got nothin' to do with hit. She's mah fou'th."

TWO drummers who traveled for rival soap manufacturers were bragging about how long their respective products had been in use.

"Why, my soap was used by the pioneers when they first scoured the plains," bragged the first salesman.

"Yes," agreed the other. "But mine was what they used to scour the plains with!"

GEORGE: Why doesn't Hiram pen his chickens up so they can't get out in the road?

Henry: Because he's making a fortune selling fresh automobile-killed chickens.

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If—I had only put on—WEED TIRE CHAINS

Regrets avail nothing when the harm is done.

Many an accident might have been avoided and many a life saved if drivers of automobiles had only exercised ordinary, everyday precaution and had listened to the warnings which for years have been sounded through the magazines and daily newspapers, viz.—"Always put on Weed Tire Chains when the roads and pavements are wet and slippery."

It's all very well to say, "I'm sorry—I didn't mean to do it."

Regrets don't mend broken limbs or bring back the lives that have been taken. The innocent victims have suffered through no fault of their own while the careless motorist escapes with a reprimand, the payment of Doctor's bills and the expense of having his car repaired.

Is there no way to make such fellows realize their responsibility and have ***more regard for the rights of others?***

Skidding accidents would never occur if every motorist exercised care in driving and put on Weed Tire Chains whenever roads and pavements were wet and slippery or covered with mud and slime.

In the interest of humanity—in the interest of safe and sane motoring Put on your Weed Tire Chains "at the first drop of rain," and insist that others do the same.

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The SCOOP of CHARLES HAMILTON POTTS

(Continued from page 12)

his means, where the fat lady, who cooked and served, made of him her favorite.

She would slip him in, when the place was full, and find him a stool and a corner of the kitchen table and the richest drippings of the *ragout*, and would say of him, tenderly: "*Il est si gentil, ce monsieur:* He never makes the least little bit of noise." Which the poilus and the doughboys, massed here in a thick atmosphere of culinary smoke, most evidently did. He could afford to eat there only once a day, but then there was the Commissary Store, with its crackers and cheese and canned pears.

HE WAS not professionally idle, either, during that time. News was to be obtained in this town filled with the men of a division recruited all over the country, and he had already sent several letters to the Bolinas *Herald*.

"Saw Alex Cramp, of our town, the other day. Alex was driving a colonel's car, just as *nonchalant*—that's what the French call it—as if he was driving one of those big Wintons of the 'Hotel Del Mar' over the Seventeen-Mile Drive like he used to. Alex is a pretty cute boy, too, let me tell you. His colonel is an ordnance colonel. Alex knows how to keep away from whizz-bangs. Good luck, Alex—don't you let 'em get you!"

"John Littlefield, of Rodeo, California, is right here in town. Your correspondent sees him every day, nearly. He is in the Quartermaster service, and at present is passing canned peaches and boxes of candy and shoes and pants and cigars across the counter of the Commissary Store. John wears a pencil on his ear and a smile on his face, and he's quite pert and busy. John doesn't spend *all* his time in the store, though—not by many jugfuls. He's to be seen a good deal about town, and seems to be quite popular with the deemoiselles and rattles their lingo as if he was born to it—due to his learning Latin at school, your scribe opines. Look out for those deemoiselles, John. One of 'em is liable to git you!"

But of mornings, all the same, Charles would loiter rather forlornly in the court of the inn where the rich correspondents lived and from which they left every morning for that vague place called "The Front." They got into their big cars, these brilliant young men of stupendous expense accounts, with *éclat*, with a full sense of their own dashing importance.

The scene was a lively one: the court full of trepidating machines, the men calling to each other (they usually rode by twos) with many military "Well, let's go's." Smart oversea caps were a-tilt upon their heads, huge boots about their calves, soft rich British "warms" about their bodies, and, getting in, they placed at their feet, with a certain ostentation, their steel helmets and gas-masks, their glasses and their maps—oh, they were having a great time, those young men! They wrapped the rugs about their legs, lit cigarets—they were ready. "Go ahead, James!" They did not say it, simply because if they had, the doughboy driver, still new to discipline and distinctions of rank, would have turned from his wheel and swatted them, but they looked as though they said it.

They composed themselves, they looked straight ahead with unseeing eyes fixed toward the perilous "front" to which they were so inflexibly going. "Br-r-r-r-r," went their machine and slowly emerged from the court, turned into the narrow street, and with a sudden leap went hissing down between the near stone façades, sending great spurts of liquid mud to right and left and high up in the air.

Charles would be left standing at the portals of the court, looking long down the street after everything was out of sight, his pale, pear-shaped visage humble and sorrowful between his two big, divergent ears. Day passed after day, and thus he remained.

Then, as he stood there one morning he was startled by a voice which said: "Hey, want a ride?"

One of the big automobiles was stopped, vibrating, near him; the driver was looking around at him, waiting for his answer. It was not he who had spoken, however, but the correspondent sitting alone in the back seat, very straight.

"Why, y-y-y-yes!" Charles stuttered.

"Hop on, then!"

Charles hopped, the car slid forward, and before he knew it Charles was whizzing down the narrow street, splashing mud as he had seen the others do, going to "the front," splendidly, as he had seen the others do. Soon they were out in the open country, speeding along a white road between naked poplars. Charles began to freeze, and his host carelessly passed him a corner of the blankets.

Charles looked at him out of the corner of his eye as they rode. He was a very young man, taciturn and proud. Taciturn and proud (Charles would have seen this, had he been a close student of human nature, which he wasn't) not so much because it was his natural bent to be so, but because after much mature thought he had adopted this manner as the one best suited to one who wished to succeed. As a matter of fact, in spite of his silent and haughty manner (calculated to keep the other fellow "guessing"), he was, this cold morning, a little lonely. That is why Charles was riding with him.

AND after a while he began to confide. "I ain't like those birds," he said, throwing a loose thumb backward. "They're always working by twos. I work alone."

The "birds" were the other correspondents, and Charles discovered, as the talk went on, that this was the only term his host used when alluding to them. It was "that bird," or "them birds," and he pronounced the word with a whirr that robbed it of all poetry, that made you see, not darting, twittering light things in a wood, but rather some old beplumed buzzard in an evil-smelling cage.

"I work alone," he repeated. "The way I look at it, I don't need any of them birds. If I can't put it over on them by myself, well then I ain't got no right here. All I want is to be let alone—and I'll do the rest. That's my motto—go it alone. Let me alone—that's all I want!"

Then suddenly this virile philosopher started on a sulfurous harangue of amazing ease and strength which, using all the invectives Charles had ever heard and several he had never heard before, ran smoothly and without a break for several kilometers. The subject of the harangue was the Press Section in general, and in particular the distribution of the cars. Charles gathered that among the cars placed at the disposition of the newspaper men was one humble four-cylinder, and that every once in a while the officer in charge dared "palm" the four-cylinder off on the speaker (this very morning he had tried it) while the high position of the paper which he represented entitled him to at least a Cadillac eight.

By and by they passed through Toul, then entered Nancy—vague names to Charles, yet carrying with them an epic vibration. But in Nancy his companion decided to stop for lunch, which he called *deejoon-eh*. He had the car pull up before a restaurant, in a gilded square, at the mere sight of which Charles Hamilton Potts paled with apprehension. The apprehension grew when he saw his lordly companion give ten francs to the chauffeur to "get a bite to eat," and became panic once they were seated before shining cambric, heavy silver and resplendent crystal!

CHARLES tried hard to steer the ordering in such a way as to mitigate if possible the completeness of the disaster. But he was handicapped by his ignorance of the language in which the menu was written, by the light, fly-paw scratches which were supposed to tell the cost of the mysterious edibles (or inedibles: he saw some one actually swallowing snails out of the shell), and still more by the cruel carelessness of his aristocratic vis-à-vis, secure as he was in the knowledge of his generous expense account, and the despotic manner in which he took all of Charles's desperate hesitations as assent. They had three bottles of wine. Charles awaited the bill as the coming of doom. It came, folded on a plate, the sentence inside.

"In a minute I'll know; in a minute I'll know," Charles thought, and with lucidity saw pass before him all his past life.

But his companion placed his hand on the folded paper and, leaning pleasantly toward Charles, said: "Tell you what—I'll toss you a coin as to which pays everything or nothing."

Charles swallowed hard, saw before him the open shining portals of Chance, and said "All right." Parker (that was his name) placed a two-cent piece on the edge of his index-finger and with a snap of his thumb flipped it into the air. "Heads!" Charles cried, and immediately thought what a fool he was not to have said "Tails." The coin came down, spun; Parker placed his capable hand upon it. Then, very slowly, like a poker-player uncovering the corners of his cards, he slipped his hand away. "Tails," he said, with frank regret, "guess it's on me." Charles did not guess otherwise, and the young man paid.

It was a nice ride afterward, and oh, what a fine day! Whenever Charles

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thought of Life in general, he felt a pleasant tingle go through him; and every now and then he found himself taking a breath that threatened to engulf the entire supply of atmosphere. They were getting into the real fighting area now. They passed through villages scarred by past battles, then finally came into one which seemed half and freshly destroyed. "Divisional Headquarters," said Parker; "we'll see what's doing—but what's the matter?"

The matter was that for a while now Charles's long, sensitive ears had been most sensitively aware of sundry detonations, some muffled, some very brazen and hard, going on all about him—to the right, the left, before and behind.

"Why, those are departures," said his contemptuous mentor when he understood the reason of Charles's silent but well-expressed emotion. "We've got batteries hidden all around here. They're firing at the roads, I guess. *Those* won't hurt you!"

They went into the long wooden shed which was Divisional Headquarters and asked for the news. It was just like going into the sheriff's office at Bolinas with your hat on and saying, "Well, what's doing?" Charles, while Parker seemed to busy himself with reports, was asking every one where he was from—and pretty soon, to his delight, he found himself with a "story." He could see it, with his mind's eye, all written—nay, all set up on the *Herald's* front page.

"RAN into Joe Grimm, of Castroville, the other day. He is pounding a typewriter at Divisional Headquarters, where shells fall at times. Joe pays no attention to shells, but just keeps a-pounding that old typewriter. He writes out all the general's orders, does Joe—some honor for a local boy, eh? Your scribe wishes he could tell you the name of that general Joe writes for, but that pesky censorship won't let him. They don't want the Huns to know what general it is, because it's a general they don't like, and if they knew he was there they'd sure whizz-bang him. Well, so long, Joe—don't let a Boche shell get that typewriter of yours!"

From there they went in still farther to Brigade Headquarters, past signs ordering that masks be worn at the ready and helmets on the head, and in that crumbled village Charles received his first baptism. There was a long singing rip, as if the sky had been made of paper and torn apart, then a hard detonation. Charles did not see the shell—as a matter of fact it did not fall near, but at a safe distance, and behind pyramids of loose stone; but immediately, without the least hesitation, his companion stepped down into a near dug-out and Charles followed.

They remained in the deep, safe dug-out, occupied by a telephone central station, while the twelve or twenty shells with which the Boche had seen fit to sprinkle the village were dully exploding somewhere overhead (one was close, and shook a little caked clay down from the dug-out ceiling), and meanwhile Parker was airing to Charles his views as to the duties of a war correspondent.

"Some of those birds," he said, with his contemptuous burr of the word, "are always telling great stories of how they got shelled, and don't go nearer the war than Army Headquarters. But there's *some* birds, the kind, you know, that write that color rot; *they* get into holes just to write all about their soul, what it feels and what it doesn't. Not for me! I'm after news—not after getting plastered. If I'm after a story, and I have to go to a bad place to get it, I go. If I don't have to go to no bad place, I don't go; I keep away anc take care of Willie. If I'd gone into this war for suicide purposes, I'd 'ave gone into the infantry, not the Press Section!"

Charles, listening, thought it all very sensible, and good advice, and though in some obscure fashion it did not quite fit with some vague sentimental urge within him, promised himself that he would take it as a guide to his own conduct. For the moment it was quite a relief to discover that a correspondent was not expected to stick himself in every inferno. When the shelling had ceased, however, and they were out of the dugout, and especially a little later, as they rode homeward along a peaceful road in the gloaming, he was not so sure.

"I like to ride with you," said Parker as they rolled into the home town. "I'll take you along again some time, maybe. You're not like those other birds who're always talking about themselves and how they got shelled. You keep quiet and don't say much. I'll take you along whenever you say!"

But in a few days Charles found that he did not have to depend on Parker exclusively. He had grown popular overnight, as it were. All he had to do was to stand in the court in the morning and he would be the recipient of at least three invitations to ride. The other "birds" had also found him out; they also were eager to take along with them one who did not talk about himself. Charles found himself in demand.

But he did not lose his head. The danger of this brilliant company lay in the expensive habits of these young men with their unlimited expense accounts. He learned to dodge the *deejoonays* and to vanish at the proper moment. And he discovered the way to live within one's means at the front. Everywhere you went you were apt to come upon a line of doughboys filing by a mess-kitchen, kit in hand.

CHARLES would gaze pleasantly at this performance for a while, then as pleasantly would accost the cook. "Well, how's the chow to-day?" "Fine! Want a taste?" "Sure! I don't mind!" In a minute Charles would find himself by the caldrons, mess-kit in hand.

He'd come to the beans; a generous dipperful would be spilled out on his plate. He came to the hash; a heavy dash of hash would fall upon the beans. He came to the bread and the jam; a ponderous bread-and-jam sandwich crowned the beans and the hash, while in his left hand his cup received a full pint of hot "juice." All this was good food, it did not cost anything, he was saving money. And besides, he often fell upon a bit of news.

"Had dinner with Eddie Sherman, of Hollister, the other day. We had it standing, because Eddie is a buck private in an artillery regiment I am not able to name. Beans, 'monkey-meat,' a big hunk of white bread—yes, sir, white bread, good old American white bread, none of that black frog stuff for our boys—and jam, from dear old California. A whizz-bang sent in by some hungry, sour Hun hit near by during the proceedings, and Eddie and your correspondent dived quick for a dugout. Eddie got some mud on his jam, and you should have heard the boy cuss. Let me tell you, if any of you worry about Eddie, it's only a boy in fine health and proper spirits could cuss like Eddie did because the Boche put some sand in his jam. Glad his fond mama wasn't near to hear him. And suppose Deacon Starbottle, of King City, had heard him! The deacon is hereabouts, I hear, representing the Y. M. C. A. around these parts. Deacon, don't ever come near Eddie when the Boches put sand in his jam!"

BUT he was learning other things—one of them that he need not depend upon the other correspondents' cars. There were all sorts of vehicles constantly on the way to the front—trucks carrying food and munitions right up to the lines, fleet little ambulance automobiles. Charles became an adept at begging rides. He wandered all over the front area and systematized his work. Just as in the old days he had covered the water-front, the court-house, the morgue, the hotels and the lodges, so now, with system he "covered" regularly Corps Headquarters, Divisional Headquarters, Brigade Headquarters, the Y. M. C. A. huts, the hospitals.

And the world became enriched (via the Bolinas, California, *Herald*) with such exciting war-news as: "Dropped in on Heavy Artillery Headquarters last night, and was given a right good show. Colonel Blank—your scribe is not allowed to mention the colonel's right name—was smoking a cigar without much to do, when suddenly inspiration came to him as a pleasant smile lit his face and he said: 'Guess I'll give Golgotha a little gas.' Golgotha is some Boche hang-out. I could see it on his big map hung on the wall. Instanter a young lieutenant went to the telephone, and telephoned to the batteries what the colonel told him. 'Give 'em two a minute, for half an hour,' he said, 'and then one a minute, for another hour. Gas!' He used all the high-sounding technical names, figures and ciphers and things, but your correspondent has forgotten them and would not be allowed to use them anyway if he hadn't. Then we sat around the stove, pleasant-like, smoking our pipes (but the colonel, he had a cigar) till all of a sudden, Boom! went the first shot, about two hundred yards away. Your correspondent went out to the back door of the shed and looked, but couldn't see anything but darkness in front of his nose. But Boom! again—and the second shell went a-whizzing toward the Huns.

"After that we all sat around the stove again and just listened to the big Booms, all nice and comfortable-like, while the Huns were getting Hell. Your correspondent enjoyed the show fine, and is mighty thankful to the colonel for giving it. (I can't mention the colonel's name, but he's from Oregon, our sister state.) Thanks, colonel—that was a mighty nice show!"

About this time the American Army

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took its first prisoner. For many weeks the division in the trenches had been rather getting the worst in its foiling with the wily Germans. But it was learning fast. First it had learned that it had something to learn, then it had set about learning it.

And finally, on February 22—I *think* that is the fateful date—or maybe it's just Washington's Birthday—or perhaps both—the division took its first prisoner, and that first was three, and taken by one man, the hero of the occasion being one Private J. N. *alias* "Cute" Cunningham, who, out on No Man's Land at night, having become separated from his companions in the dark, came walking back to his trench at dawn, driving before him an entire German patrol.

The affair, of course, caused a stir at Press Headquarters. The typewriters worked like machine guns, the cable was surcharged. But a full two weeks went by before the agitation was communicated to Charles Hamilton Potts. Then suddenly every one seemed to take an interest in his work.

"How much did you write on that Cunningham story?" one of the correspondents would say to him, half absent-mindedly, and yet fixing him with a meditative eye.

"WHY," Charles would stammer, embarrassed, filled with a foreboding of mistake, "not much—nothing at all, in fact. You see, I knew the Associated Press would have it, and the *Herald* takes the service."

"You didn't write anything?"

"No, I thought the Associated story would be enough."

"Didn't write anything *at all?*" This in a voice raised to the climax of surprise.

"Well, no; I didn't."

The correspondent would turn on his heel then—as though he felt it was no use to disturb further such secure innocence. But another would take the matter up.

"How much did you write on the Cunningham story?" this one would begin, in the manner of one slipping a question of great importance while holding the one asked in ignorance of its importance.

"Well—not much. Fact is, I thought the Associated Press story would be enough. Fact is, I didn't write anything at all about it."

"You didn't!"

"No; I didn't."

"Well, I'll be——" trailing off in speechless amazement.

Charles went about thus harassed by mystery for several days, when the full import of it all hit him full in the face. Parker stopped him, looked at him long, standing with legs apart as if hesitating to speak, then finally spoke. "Don't you *know* about Cunningham?" he said gravely.

"What do you mean?" Charles countered.

"Don't you *know* about him?"

"What?" poor Charles said.

"Why, he's a Californian. He's from some town there; San José." He pronounced it "Saint Jaws."

In the midst of his consternation, Charles's first thought was for the honor of his state. "San Hos-hay," he said severely.

"Well, he's from that," said Parker, disdaining the correction.

"I should have interviewed him!" Charles almost wailed.

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"Yes, you should," said Parker judicially. He seemed to be thinking. "After all, the story is still good—locally," he went on. "Why don't you interview him now?"

"I'll interview him to-morrow!" Charles cried with the enthusiasm of one about to make amends for sin.

Parker seemed to think to-morrow was an excellent date. "Yes, go on; interview him to-morrow," he urged. "He's in K Company of the Twenty-eighth. I think they're in the trenches just now, though," he added doubtfully.

Charles remembered the rule spoken by this same man in a dug-out one day. "If I'm after a story, I'll go anywhere; otherwise, nixie," or words to that effect. "I'll go get that interview right where he is," he announced bravely.

"Well, it's a good story," Parker concluded. "I don't blame you."

The following morning at Press Headquarters was one of those grand days which came now and then. Each correspondent knew something which he thought perhaps the next man did not know, in which case, darned if he'd tell him. There was a good deal of jockeying and every one got off early, but at different times, by different exits, and with mysterious destinations—and all landed together an hour later at Divisional Headquarters—all looking a bit sheepish.

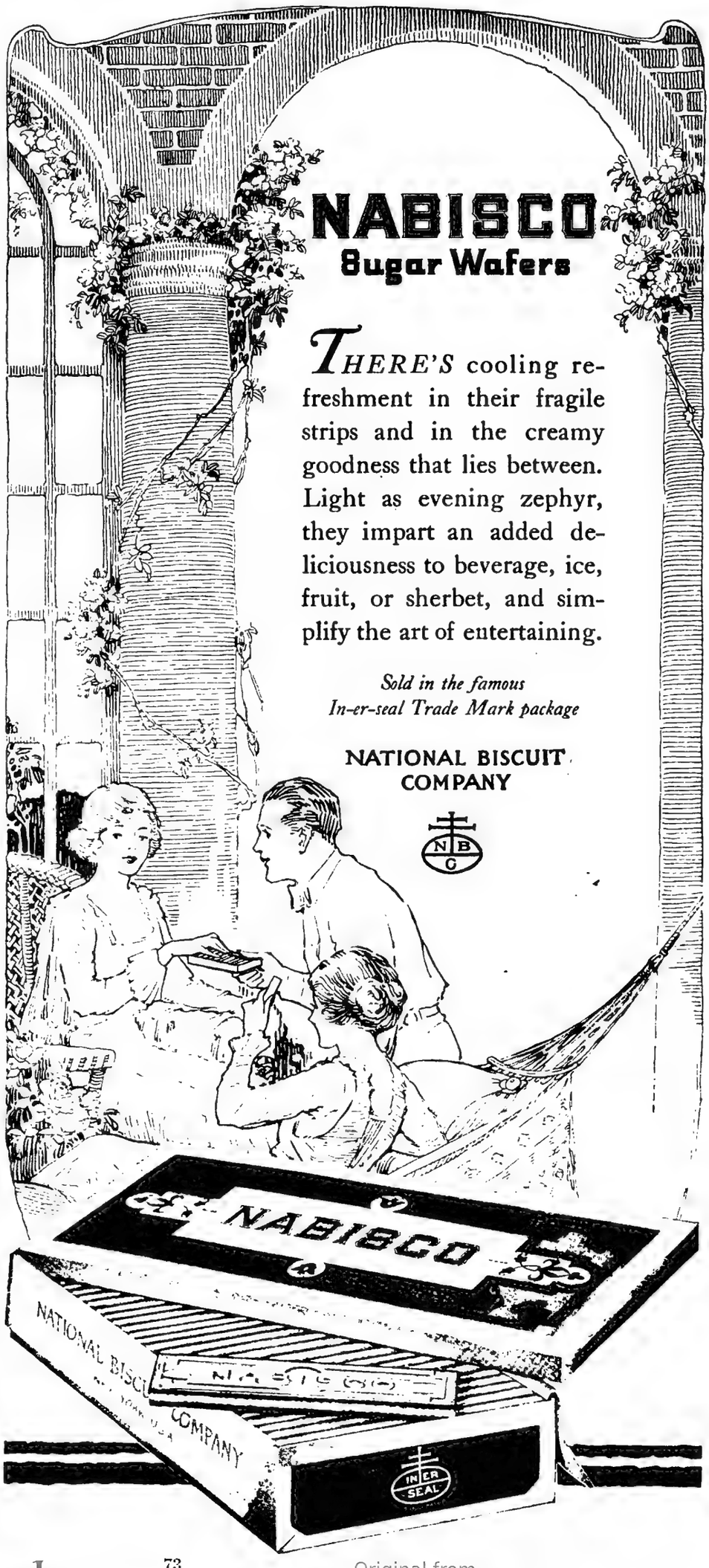
But Charles had business elsewhere, had only one concern—to get to Private "Cute" Cunningham, K Company, Twenty-eighth Infantry. Inquiry at Headquarters confirmed Parker's surmise. The Twenty-eighth was in the trenches. Charles left immediately for the lines. He got a ride part of the way in a little ambulance—till the ambulance stopped in the lee of a small wood. It was not the only one stationed there. There were many hugging the edge of the wood, and all camouflaged with branches and twigs so as to seem part of the wood. Charles went on afoot.

"Going far?" inquired the orderly who had ridden with him. "To the front lines," Charles called back rather proudly. The orderly looked puzzled, was about to say something, decided that it was not of his affairs, and, still with a little hesitation, shouted: "Well, here's good luck!"

"Good luck!" Charles shouted back, and hastened along the road.

THE road, creased with the wheels of convoys that passed at night, was altogether empty now—with not a horse, a truck or a man. It stretched between fields of sterile ooze, pitted with green-scummed shell-holes, as empty and lifeless as the road. And the air above was void—not a plane in sight; and the air about also was silent and dead, with not a shot, not a sound, to stir its heavy immobility. "Nice and quiet morning," Charles said to himself, though somehow this was not quite the effect the unexpected conditions were having on him. "I'm going to have a snap, a snap!"

He went through the jagged low stone stumps of an obliterated hamlet, and on the other side the road was overgrown with grass. It became a path after a while; the path gradually sank, and he was in the communication gut. He followed this, for miles it seemed to him, in many twists and turnings, slipping on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the slimy duck-boards which rose now and then and hit him in the face, floundering through holes with water to the hip, gathering upon himself a shell of mud from the oozing sides.

In the midst of this mole-like wandering, which seemed to promise to be eternal and fruitless, there came a sudden change which he greeted gladly. Back of him somewhere, and far, a heavy gun boomed. Another followed. Leisurely other guns took up the voice, lazily at first, then with precipitation, till many were shooting in a continuous rumbling. Tense trajectories established themselves overhead, like invisible and sonorous rails upon which ton-heavy things passed shrieking and whining, and Charles instinctively looked up, half-expecting to see what he heard.

WHAT he did see was more glorious and wrested a cry of admiration from his narrow lungs: great planes were sliding by overhead, shining-white, many of them, making the heart soar with a sense of freedom and holiday. "Gee, that's something like!" Charles cried to himself. "*Now* things are beginning to look like they ought!" Upon which, debouching from the communication trench, he plumped into a trench.

Things were continuing to look as they ought. The trench was bristling with bayonets, was tight with men crouching shoulder to shoulder, packs upon their backs, rifles in their hands and grenades on their belts—just Charles's idea of what a trench should be: packed with armed men on the alert beneath a canopy of protecting artillery.

"What regiment?" Charles asked of the nearest man, who happened to be a sergeant.

"Twenty-eighth!" the man answered, shouting into his ear.

"What company?"

"A Company."

"Do you know where I can find Company K?"

"K Company? Over the left of us somewhere, sir. I think she's left guide to-day."

"Thank you," said Charles politely, and went on along the trench, on a traverse of the sector from right to left. The trench wound, doubled, redoubled; he had to ask his way often, but that was easy, for the trenches were full of men. They stood—crouching a little, their heads below the level of the parapet, holding their rifles; now and then there was a group about a machine gun.

Some seemed alert and nervous, others seemed to have been here since early morn and looked tired, and some young boys, their heads against the wall of the parapet, slept standing. It was exactly what Charles knew trenches must be. He remembered some of the blasé, disillusioned descriptions of some of his colleagues. Always he had felt that they were wrong, that the sight *would* hold excitement and splendor. Well, they *were* wrong, and it was he, all the time, without seeing, who had been right. "Just look at that, look at that, look at that!" he repeated to himself, coming upon proof after proof of the rightness of his expectations.

And diligently he wormed himself along the front, toward K Company, "Cute" Cunningham, and his interview. Already he saw how he would begin it; he saw the first line in print upon the *Herald's* page. "Sat with Cuty Cunningham of San José in the trenches the other day——"

It was a long way to K Company, though. The companies seemed to be placed alphabetically from right to left: A, B, C—it was a long way to K Company. But Charles did not weaken. In one way, things were well arranged for him. Nothing seemed to be coming down on the trenches, or very little. Now and then he came upon a place where evidently something had lately fallen, but the place had been cleared nice and clean. Everything seemed to be going Germany way.

"Pretty quiet this morning," he shouted at a boy, coming abruptly upon him around a turn.

The boy grinned. "Yes, sir," he said huskily. "It's nuts just now."

"I suppose it's likely to pop any moment," Charles suggested amiably.

"Oh, you bet—I mean, yes, sir!"

A little farther he came upon a group of staff officers, and was stopped short by a young aide.

"Here, where are you going, my man?" said the beardless youth severely.

"I'm looking for Company K," Charles answered, in the tone of one saying "I'm looking for my collar-button."

"Well, you can't go on," began the aide, then, his eyes falling upon the white and red brassard on Charles's sleeve, "Oh, you're one of those newspaper fellows?" he asked in a tone at once of understanding and distinct disapproval.

"Yes, sir. Correspondent."

"Well, go ahead," he said shortly. And added, beneath his breath, "Go bust yourself."

He returned to his superior at the head of the group. "It's just one of those newspaper men, Colonel," he reported. "He's looking for K Company," he added, as though he were respectfully offering his superior a subtle joke.

THE colonel laughed. "Hadn't we better stop him?" he asked, in a tone that did not place much importance on the problem.

"I think he's all right," said the young man. "Those correspondents horn in about everywhere."

"Well, let him go," said the colonel negligently.

Charles, unaware of the fact that his fate was being discussed, was already pushing on his errand. The next company was H—he was making progress. He passed through H, passed I, then was among J's men. It seemed to him that the artillery volume had abruptly increased or had changed in character, had taken a snarling, more personal, note. Crawling over a segment of the trench where a late slide of the parapet had not been quite cut through yet, he had a fleet glimpse of the outside world. To his right, along a line which must be about that of the German positions, the earth was springing toward the sky in serried geysers.

"Gee, but they are getting it!" he thought, as he dived out of sight again. A strange tingling heat went through his veins and up to his head, his chest swelled. "Gee, but this is something like it!" he shouted in the uproar—and was astonished

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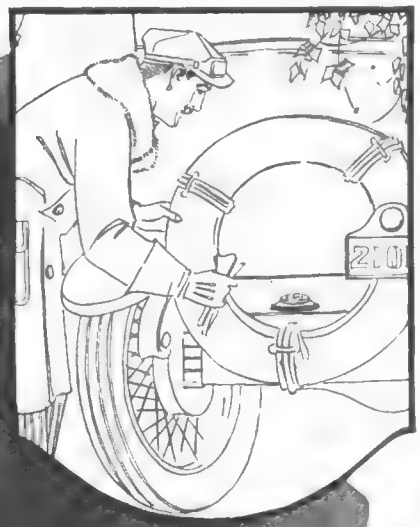

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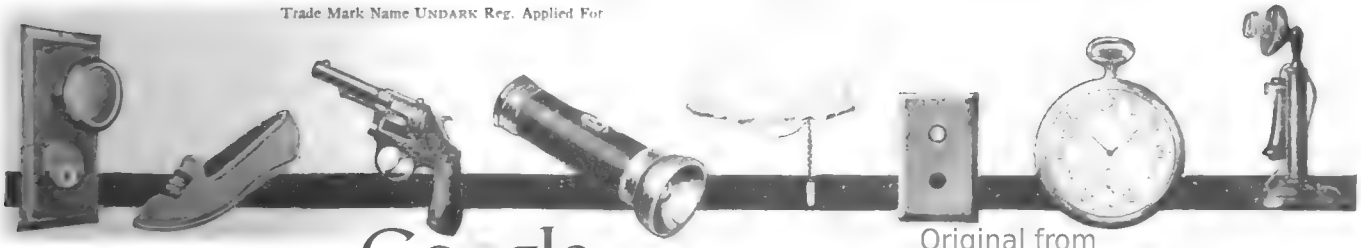

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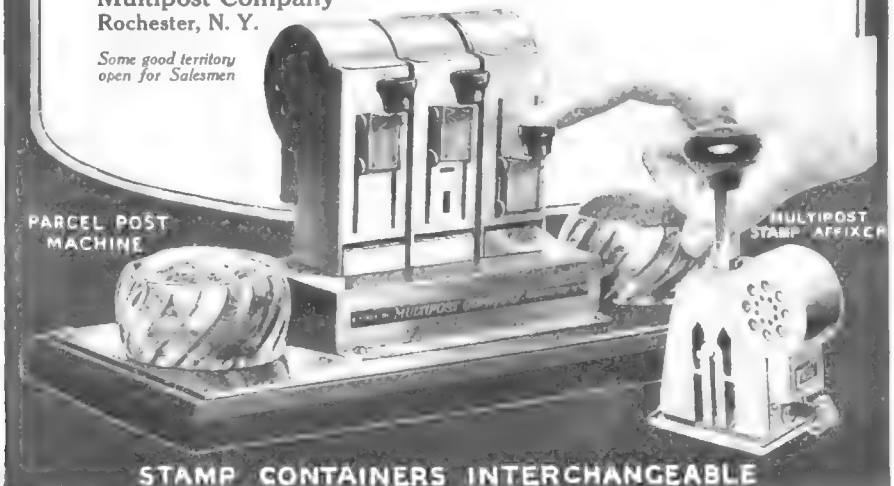

to feel slip through his lips that word "Gee," which he never used, being always mild-spoken.

"Company J," he thought, returning to the business at hand. "K will be the next."

He came to an abrupt twist in the trench, issued from it—and here was K stretched before him. "This K?" he asked of the man nearest to him.

THE man nearly in whose ear he was shouting, did not answer. He was a young lieutenant and, his back to Charles, was gazing intently at the watch strapped to his wrist. "This K?" Charles asked again. This time the young man raised high above his head the hand with the watch, with his other seized firmly his automatic, and, to Charles's complete amazement, sprang out of the trench.

"Well I'll be——" Charles began, watching the disappearance with bulging eyes, and desisted, hopeless of the right word. He looked down the trench, and his surprise became alarm. For the movement started by the young lieutenant was undulating all the way down like the coil of a snake; from end to end the men were busy climbing out, kicking their toes into the steps cut in the earth, helped from below, helped from above, holding their rifles carefully out of the mud.

Charles started running along the trench. "Wait a minute, wait a minute!" his soul was shouting. But as he advanced, a void was forming before him which ran as fast as he. By the time he had reached the center of the trench, K Company had vanished.

Charles sat down heavily, dropped his head in his hands, and said: "There goes my interview!"

"The Scoop of Charles August Hamilton Potts" *will be concluded in the August number.*

Back Home

By Lucile Topping Howell

THE low-hung August moon, half spent,
Throws kindly drape of silver-gray
On sagging fence and gate-post bent;
And shadow fingers idly stray
Across the path and point the place
Where once sweet-williams mingled deep
With marigolds; then gently trace
The old house nestling there—asleep.

A moldering shutter's grimy pane
Winks as the rusted lock I turn.
The door creaks—and I'm home again,
Where ghostly fires of welcome burn.
Beside me, through the empty halls,
Two shadows walk with silent tread,
A barefoot boy in overalls,
A man with bent and silvered head.

And following closely in their train
A nameless yellow mongrel's pup.
And then the dear old voice again,
"Son, it's time the cows were up."
Ghosts? No—only Dad and I
And Shep. God—how these memories come!
Dad grins and chuckles sort of dry,
He's glad to-night I've come back home.

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The Home Correspondence School
Dept. 347, Springfield, Mass.
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HIDDEN CREEK

(*Continued from page 57*)

dreadful lack in her life of all the usual protections. Was youth meant so to venture itself? This was what young men had done since the beginning of time. She thought of Hilliard. His life must have been just such a series of disconnected experiments. Danger was in the very pattern of such freedom. But she was a girl, *only* a girl as the familiar phrase expresses it—a seventeen-year-old girl. She was reminded of a pathetic and familiar line, "A woman naturally born to fears."

A wholesome reaction to pride followed, and suddenly memory of Miss Blake, of her corduroy trousers stuffed into boots, of her broad strong body, her square face with its firm lips and masterful red-brown eyes; a very heartening memory for such a moment. Here was a woman that had adventured without fear and had quite evidently met with no disaster.

Sheila came to a little tumbling tributary and crossed it on a log. On the farther side the trail broadened, grew more distinct; through an opening in tall gray misty cottonwoods she saw the corner of a log house. At the same instant a dreadful tumult broke out. The sound sent Sheila's blood in a slapping wave back upon her heart. All of her body turned cold. She was fastened by stone feet to the ground.

It was the laughter of damned souls, an unhuman despairing mockery of God. It tore the quiet evening into shreds of fear. This house was a madhouse holding revelry. No—of course they were wolves, a pack of wolves. Then with a warmth of returning circulation Sheila remembered Miss Blake's dogs, the descendants of the wolf-dog that had littered on the body of a dead man. Quarter-wolf, was it? These voices had no hint of the homely barking of a watch-dog.

BUT Sheila braced her courage. Miss Blake made good use of her pack. They pulled her sled winters at Hidden Creek. They must then be partly civilized by service. If only—she smiled a desperate smile at the uncertainty—they didn't tear her to pieces when she came out from the shelter of the trees. There was very great courage in Sheila's short lonely march through the little grove of cottonwood trees. She was as white as the mountain columbine. She walked slowly and held her head high. She had taken up a stone for comfort.

At the end of the trees she saw a house, a three-sided, one-storied building of logs very pleasantly set in a circle of aspen trees backed by taller firs, toppling over which stood a great sharp crest of rocky ledges nine thousand feet high, edged with the fire of sunset. At one side of the house eight big dogs were leaping at the ends of their chains. They were tied to trees or to small kennels at the foot of trees. And, God be thanked! Sheila let fall her stone—they were *all* tied.

The door at the end of the nearest wing of the house opened, and Miss Blake stood on the threshold and held up her hands. At sight of her the dogs stopped their howling instantly, and cringed on their bellies or sat yawning on their bushy haunches. Miss Blake's resonant deep voice seemed to pounce upon Sheila above the chatter of the stream, which, running about three sides of the glade, was now, at the silence of the dogs, incessantly audible.

"Well, if it isn't the little barmaid!" cried Miss Blake and advanced, wiping her hand on a white apron tied absurdly over the corduroy trousers and cowboy boots. "Well, if you aren't as welcome as the flowers in May! So you thought you'd leave the street-lamps and come take a look at the stars?"

They met, and Sheila took the strong square hand. She was afflicted by a sudden dizziness.

"That's it," she faltered, "this time I thought I'd try—the stars."

With that she fell against Miss Blake, and felt just before she dropped into blackness that she had been saved by firm arms from falling to the ground.

CHAPTER FOUR

Beasts

THE city rippled into light. It bloomed, blossom on blossom, like some enchanted jungle under the heavy summer sky. Dickie sat on a bench in Washington Square. He sat forward, his hands hanging between his knees, his lips parted, and he watched the night. It seemed to him that it was filled with the clamor of iron-throated beasts, running to and fro after their prey. The heat was a humid, solid, breathless weight—a heat unknown to Millings. Dickie wore his threadbare blue serge suit. It felt like a garment of lead.

There were other people on the benches—limp and sodden outlines. Dickie had glanced at them and had glanced away. He did not want to think that he looked like one of these—half-crushed insects, bruised into immobility. A bus swept round the corner and moved with a sort of top-heavy tipsy dignity under the white arch. It was loaded with humanity, its top black with heads. "It ain't a crowd," thought Dickie, "it's a swarm." His eyes followed the ragged sky-line. "Why is it so horrible?" he asked himself—"horrible and beautiful and sort of poisonous—it plum' scares a fellow!"

A diminished moon, battered like a trodden silver coin, stood up above him. By tilting his head he could look at it through an opening in the dusty electric-brightened boughs. The stars were pin-pricks here and there in the dense sky. The city flaunted its easy splendor triumphantly before their pallid insignificance. Tarnished purities, forgotten ecstasies, burned-out inspirations—so the city shouted raucously to its faded firmament.

Dickie's fingers slid into his pocket. The moon had reminded him of his one remaining dime. He might have bought a night's lodging with it, but after one experience of such lodgings he preferred his present quarters. In Dickie's mind there was no association of shame or ignominy with a night spent under the sky. But fear and ignominy tainted and clung to his memory of that other night.

He had saved his dime, going hungry rather than admit to himself that he was absolutely at the end of his resources. To-morrow he would not especially need

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that dime. He had a job. He would begin to draw pay. In his own phrasing, he would "buy him a square meal and rent him a room somewhere." Upon these two prospects his brain fastened with a leech-like persistency.

And yet above anything he had faced in his life, he dreaded the job and the room. The inspiration of his flight, the impulse that had sped him out of Millings like a fire-tipped arrow, that determination to find Sheila, to rehabilitate himself in her esteem, to serve her, to make a fresh start, had fallen from him like a dead flame. The arrow-flight was spent. He had not found Sheila. He had no way of finding her.

She was not at her old address. Her father's friend, the Mr. Hazeldean that had brought Sylvester to Marcus's studio, knew nothing of her. Mrs. Halligan, her former landlady, knew nothing of her.

Dickie, having summoned Mrs. Halligan to her door-sill, had looked past her up the narrow steep staircase. "Did she live away up there?" he had asked. "Yes, sorr. And 'twas a climb for the poor little crayture; but there was days when she'd come down it like a burrd to meet her pa."

Dickie had faltered, white and empty-hearted, before the kindly Irishwoman who remembered so vividly Sheila's downward-winged rush of welcome. For several hours after his visit to the studio building he had wandered aimlessly about, then his hunger had bitten at him and he had begun to look for work. It was not difficult to find.

A restaurant displayed a need of waiters. Dickie applied. He had often "helped out" in that capacity, as in most others, at the Aura. He cited his experience, referred to Mr. Hazeldean and was engaged. The pay seemed to him sufficient to maintain life. So much for that! Then he went to his bench and watched the day pant itself into the night. His loneliness was a pitiful thing, his utter lack of hope or inspiration was a terrible thing.

But as the night went slowly by he faced this desolation with extraordinary fortitude. It was part of that curious detachment, that strange gift of impersonal observation. Dickie bore no grudges against life. His spirit had a fashion of standing away, tiptoe, on wings. It stood so now, like a presence above the miserable, half-starved body that occupied the bench and suffered the sultriness of August and the pains of abstinence. Dickie's wide eyes, that watched the city and found it horrible and beautiful and frightening, were entirely empty of bitterness and of self-pity. They had a sort of wistful patience.

There came at last a cool little wind, and under its ministration Dickie let fall his head on his arms and slept. He was blessed by a dream: shallow water clapping over a cobbled bed, the sharp rustle of wind-edged aspen leaves, and two stars, tender and misty, that bent close and smiled. He woke up and stared at the city. He got up and walked about. He was faint now and felt chilled, although the asphalt was still soft underfoot and smelled of hot tar.

AS HE moved listlessly along the pavement, a girl brushed against him, looked up and murmured to him. She was small and slight. His heart seemed to leap away from the contact and then to leap almost irresistibly to meet it. He turned away and went back quickly toward the

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Whose Birthday comes in JULY

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Square. He looked over his shoulder furtively. But the girl had disappeared, and there was no one in sight but a man who walked unsteadily.

Dickie suddenly knew why he had saved that dime. The energy of a definite purpose came to him. He remembered a swinging-door back there around a corner; but when he reached the saloon it was closed. Dickie had a humiliating struggle with tears. He went back to his bench and sat there, trembling and swearing softly to himself. He had not the strength to look further. He was no longer the Dickie of Millings, a creature possessed of loneliness and vacancy and wandering fancies; he was no longer Sheila's lover; he was a prey to strong desires. In truth, thought Dickie, seeking even now with his deprecatory smile for likenesses and words, the city was full of beasts, silent and stealthy and fanged. That spirit, aloof, maintained its sweet detachment. Beneath its observation Dickie fought with a grim unreasoning panic that was very like the fear of a man pursued by wolves.

CHAPTER FIVE

Neighbor, Neighbor

EVEN in the shadow of after events, those first two months at Miss Blake's ranch swam like a golden galleon through Sheila's memory. Never had she felt such well-being of body, mind and soul. Never had she known such dawns and days, such dusks, such sapphire nights. Sleep came like a highwayman to hold up an eager traveler, but came irresistibly. It caught her up out of life as it catches up a healthy child. Never before had she worked so heartily: out-of-doors in the vegetable garden, indoors in the sunny kitchen, its windows and door open to the tonic air; never before had she eaten so heartily. Nothing had tasted like the trout they caught in Hidden Creek, like the juicy sweet vegetables they picked from their own laborious rows, like the berries they gathered in nervous anticipation of that rival berrier, the brown bear.

Miss Blake's treatment of her, half-bluff, half-mocking, her curt good-humored commands, her cordial bullying, was a rest to nerves more raveled than Sheila knew, from her experience in Millings. She grew rosy brown, her hair seemed to sparkle along its crisp ripples, her little throat filled itself out round and firm, she walked with a spring and a swing, she sang and whistled, no Mrs. Hudson near to scowl at her. Dishwashing was not drudgery, cooking was a positive pleasure. Everything smelt so good. She was always shutting her eyes to enjoy the smell of things, forgetting to listen in order to taste thoroughly, forgetting to look in the delight of listening to such silences, and forgetting to breathe in the rapture of sight.

Miss Blake and she put up preserves, and Sheila had to invent jests to find some pretext for her laughter, so ridiculous was the look of that broad square back, its hair short above the man's flannel collar, and the apron strings tied pertly above the very wide, slightly worn corduroy breeches and the big boots. Sheila was always thinking of a certain famous Puss of fairy-tale memory, and biting her tongue to keep it from the epithet. After Hilliard gave her the black horse and she began to explore the mountain game-trails, her life seemed as full of pleasantness as it could hold. And yet, with just that gift of Hilliard's, the overshadowing of her joy began. No, really before that, with his first visit.

That was in late September when the nights were frosty and Miss Blake had begun to cut and stack her wood for winter, and to use it for a crackling hearth fire after supper. They were sitting before such a fire when Hilliard came.

Miss Blake sat man-fashion on the middle of her spine, her legs crossed, a magazine in her hands, and on her blunt nose a pair of large black-rimmed spectacles. Her feet and hands and her cropped head, though big for a woman's, looked absurdly small in comparison to the breadth of her hips and shoulders. She was reading the *Popular Science Monthly*. This and the *Geographic* and *Current Events* were regularly taken by her. She read with keen intelligence; her comments were as shrewd as a knife-edge.

The chair she sat in was made from elk-horns and looked like the throne of some Norse chieftain. Behind her on the wall hung the stuffed head of a huge sea-walrus, his tusks gleaming, the gift of that exploring brother who seemed to be her only living relative. There were other tokens of his wanderings, a polar bear skin, an ivory Eskimo spear. As a more home-like trophy, Miss Blake had hung an elk-head which she herself had laid low—a very creditable shot, though out of season. She had been short of meat. In the corner was a pianola topped by piles of record-boxes. At her feet lay Berg, the dog, snoring faintly and as cozy as a kitten.

The firelight made Miss Blake's face and hair ruddier than usual; her eyes, when she raised them for a glance at Sheila, looked as though they were full of red sparks which might at any instant break into flame. Sheila was wearing one of her flimsy little black frocks recovered from the wrinkles of its journey, and she had decorated her square-cut neck with some yellow flowers. On these Miss Blake's eyes rested every now and then with a sardonic gleam.

Outside, Hidden Creek told its interminable chattering tale, centuries long; the little skinny horse cropped, getting his difficult meal with his few remaining teeth. They could hear the dogs move with a faint rattle of chains. Sometimes there would be a distant rushing sound, a snow-slide thousands of feet above their heads on the mountain. Above these familiar sounds there came, at about eight o'clock that evening, the rattle of horse's hoofs through the little stream, and at the instant broke out the hideous clamor of the dogs, a noise that never failed to whiten Sheila's cheeks.

Miss Blake sat up straight and snatched off her spectacles. She looked at Sheila with a hard look.

"Have you been sending out invitations, Sheila?" she asked.

"No, of course not." Sheila had flushed. She could guess whose horse's hoofs were trotting across the little clearing.

A man's voice spoke to the dogs commandingly. Miss Blake's eyebrows came down over her eyes. A man's step struck the porch. A man's knock rapped sharply at the door.

"Come in," said Miss Blake. She spoke it like a sentry's challenge.

The door opened and there stood Cosme Hilliard, hat in hand, his smiling Latin mouth showing the big white Saxon teeth.

The next instalment of ***"Hidden Creek"*** *will appear in the August number.*

Leviathans

By David Morton

YOU who have seen the foam upon bright wrecks
  Of stately ships that never came to port—
Where sea-things crawl upon those sunken decks,
  And fishes through those cabins take their sport;
You who have seen the gilded, gay saloon
  Turned watery caverns for the spawn of seas,
Where spars, once splendid, rot beneath the moon
  That once was glad to sail with such as these—

Let never word of pity pass your lips,
  For these were proud in ways you can not know;
And pride is slow to die in ruined ships
  Who can but dream that some day they will go,
Their wounds all healed, their clean strength whole again,
  Monarch of seas, marvel of moons and men.

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The SPY WEB

(*Continued from page 29*)

to do so. At night nothing stood between this young man and all the secrets of the corps except a few ordinary locks and a sleeping staff officer on duty.

At a neighboring château, also inhabited by the general staff, subterfuge had to be resorted to to keep a suspect Flemish family from returning to live there, as they had threatened to.

"I hear," wrote madame, in effect, "that the château is now quite safe and that no more shells fall there."

"Now if," ruminated the general officer commanding, "we could arrange to have a few explosions in the château grounds the day they come back, they'd soon clear off again."

And so it was ordained. Small land mines were laid in the garden and all through lunch on the day of the Flemish family's return, "shells" fell in the grounds. The good people were petrified and didn't even unpack their belongings.

"This is quite an every-day affair, madame, I can assure you," deplored the general, in saying farewell.

Dangerous Telephoning

ANOTHER danger that had to be guarded against behind the lines was the possible "tapping" by enemy agents of Headquarters telephone and telegraph lines. The network of army wires in France was astounding. Almost every hamlet was "on the phone." The lines criss-crossed amazingly; it must have been possible to wind them round and round the earth. At any point of this vast mileage of wire, a "tapping" wire might have been cunningly affixed by a spy who would then, from cottage or hayrick, be able to overhear conversations on military matters to his heart's content.

And a vast deal of staff work in the army was done over the telephone. In the early days, before the armies in the field had their own system of lines, recourse had to be had to civilian circuits and this led in one case to the arrest on suspicion of an operator at Doullens. The operator, a girl, was found time and again eavesdropping, but protested that she was doing so in order to improve her English.

As the war progressed, various improvements were effected in the Allied *contre-espionage* organization in the field, notably the creation of "special areas." A special area was the rearward area of that region where it was proposed to attack. Thus, some time before the attack at Amiens, that town became subject to extraordinary measures of precaution. Among these precautions was the systematic spreading of false reports, in the hope that enemy agents would hear them and pass them on to their masters.

All things considered, the Germans must have found spying behind the Allied lines a task of surpassing difficulty. Not so the Allies. The British alone were so completely in touch with life and happenings behind the German lines that on the last advance that led through Lille and Valenciennes and Mons and Roubaix, it was possible to send in, roughly, the following espionage summary:

"On previous knowledge we arrested three hundred spies and suspects among

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Announcing the eagerly awaited MARGOT ASQUITH'S DIARY

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"As well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb"

Written with the dash and fire of one who has lived to squeeze from each minute of life the satisfying joy of being, the Diary of Margot Asquith, wife of England's great Liberal, will register up to the keen expectations its heralded publication created on both sides of the Atlantic. She has promised herself to

"write without fear or favor exactly what I think and with a strict regard to unmodeled truth."

and her copy is English society and politics from the days of Gladstone down to the black hours of 1914 and the rumble of guns in France, as seen through the eyes of a woman of insight and rare wit. Here you see the great figures of your own day, handled without gloves, their foibles laughed at and most intimate conversations racily interpreted by an unconventional young girl who slyly smoked cigarettes and flirted with engineers on trains in Victorian days! She sat on Tennyson's knee and he read her "Maud" in unforgetable voice. Gladstone coached her as the wife-to-be of England's Premier. Balfour was an understanding friend through years of political turmoil and social warfare. And the much talked of "Souls" is intimately described by Mrs. Asquith, who was a leader of that curious circle.

Accounting for her limited musical accomplishments she ventures that

"marriage and four babies, five step-children and a husband in high politics."

do limit one's time and ambition, but seemingly in no other field of human effort does she fail to plunge with Rooseveltian vigor. In the fields, on the dance floor, or behind the tea cups of English politics, Margot Asquith, who writes of her outdoor life

"I have broken both collar-bones, all my ribs, knee caps, dislocated my jaw, fractured my skull, gashed my nose and had five concussions of the brain."

is a forceful personality who hates timidity and indecision and feels the world her oyster. In the August issue, out July 15th.

Metropolitan

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the civilian population and at once evacuated these. The majority of those on our black list, however, retired with the enemy. A large number of others, not definitely classified as spies, are now under observation."

Enemies Within

NOTHING, in fact, so surprised the Belgian civilian population as the accuracy of the British Intelligence service in regard to themselves. It would be idle to blink the fact—which the British had known, incidentally, for months and years—that a certain number of Belgian women in the occupied territory failed lamentably to sustain the honor of their sex, and entered into friendly relations with the Germans. The Allies knew all about this—so much so that on their entry into each Belgian town such as Mons, Charleroi and Namur, the first thing they did was to take these ladies into custody—with their German sympathies they might have been left behind by the enemy as spies—and to send them far away, back out of the zone of operations.

The laboriously compiled "black list" of the British proved unerringly correct. Belgium has suffered many cruel wrongs. They are known to the world as few countries' wrongs have ever been trumpeted abroad. But this moral side of her ordeal—this battling with enemies within—has not been so made known. The upper classes — yes, they were able to bar their doors upon the intruder, to look straight ahead while passing him on the pavement. Not so the masses . . . four years is a long time to have people on your hearth, as it were.

A visit to Belgium after Armistice revealed a schism in every town and hamlet—those who had been friendly and those who had stood aloof. You passed cottages with broken windows and doors with "*Boche*" chalked on them, even as they did with the plague of old. White-hot vendettas had arisen that can not be calmed in a generation. For Belgians had caused other Belgians to be imprisoned or sent to their deaths. Belgians had made fortunes out of the enemy, and incidentally helped the enemy to fight other Belgians. Nor was this tragic treachery confined to Belgium. The horrible story of the informers of Laon—and such informers were not confined to Laon by any means—must have caused even Zola to gasp, and withdraw from circulation his Rougon-Macquart series as unrepresentative of human baseness and degradation. No figure so *macabre* has been seen, even at the Grand Guignol, as the "she-devil of Laon," Alice Aubert.

Created and organized by an Alsatian named Thomas, attached to the secret service of Heeringen's German army nearest to Paris, the savage circle spread, in all, to twenty-five miserable Zolaesque individuals, men and women, mostly young. Had they restricted their activity to spying it would have been bad enough, but these vultures even went the length of denouncing, on a hard cash basis, their very friends and relatives.

In one case, in which Alice Aubert was concerned, a Madame Hain was denounced to Thomas for hiding two French Senegalese *tirailleurs* in her house. Rather than harm should befall their benefactress, the two black men delivered themselves

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from their hiding-place and were shot next day. Aubert received three hundred marks for her treachery. Another of the women denounced her own husband in order to be free to carry on an intrigue with a German officer, while a third, Gabrielle Lambert, gave her own father-in-law away because he hampered her love-affair with Thomas.

Immorality runs through the whole of this abominable tale—immorality, greed and drink.

Alice Aubert, described as "a young woman of extraordinarily hard and cruel appearance, but with the remains of a sort of savage beauty," besides denouncing the two Senegalese, gave information regarding two other French soldiers in hiding and the man befriending them, the Mayor of Anguilcourt. All three were shot. Alice Aubert was also a military agent. Twice she smuggled herself through to Paris via Switzerland, posing as an evacuated refugee, and set about assembling information as ordered in detail by her love of the moment, Lieutenant von Heeringen, whom, she alleged, used to horsewhip her into agreeing to act the spy.

Traitorous Spies

ALICE AUBERT had worked for the Germans from the beginning in 1914, and was carrying out a mission in Geneva, toward Christmas of that year, for which she received in payment two hundred francs. Later, for one of her trips to Paris, where she was told to watch the movements of troops, she received six hundred francs.

A man named Togue, for recruiting Frenchmen to act as spies behind the Allied lines, received the equivalent of six pounds a month and free wine. Angèle Herpson, also a German officer's mistress, confessed that she falsely denounced a neighbor for no other reason than that she had refused to sell her nails, and another neighbor because she had a bicycle.

Herbert Leandre, who placed himself under the orders of a German secret-police agent at the beginning of the war, denounced his own brother as having given shelter to a British aviator. Leandre accompanied Germans on their search missions, used torture to compel his unfortunate compatriots to confess, and struck a man and his son and daughter in prison until blood came. Moise Lemoine for fifty marks denounced a number of people who, in a camp of prisoners, had seized a homing pigeon without releasing it, and who altogether were sentenced by the Germans to fifty-six years' imprisonment.

Lemoine's excuse for spying was his physical and moral distress during the German occupation, and the statement can not be lightly dismissed, since the moral effects of tyrannical oppression have ever been one and the same through history.

One fears that there existed other French and Belgian traitors and traitresses besides the informers of Laon. While nothing could be said of it at the time, lest French susceptibilities should be wounded, Intelligence knew all along and all too well what was going on. Special Allied agents, detailed to watch the civilian population in the occupied territories, would report specific cases of French and Belgians working for the Germans, while an additional source of information existed in the steady stream of refugees being evacuated by the Germans and reentering France via Switzerland.

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Occasionally, too, a captured German prisoner would drop a remark that would inculpate some Belgian or French resident of a town or village in the occupied zone.

An ever-increasing black list relating to the country opposite resulted from such intelligence, and one recalls that even in 1915, six hundred women of Lille, Roubaix and Tourcoing were already on this list, while over three hundred babies with German soldier fathers had been born in the coal-mining districts of Lens-la-Bassee, Carvin, etc. It was curious, in this respect, how certain towns held friendly aloof from contamination by the very hideous Hun, while other centers were reported as "weak" and "apt to fraternize." Cambrai and St. Quentin stood out in this surpassing test as rocks of granite, their inhabitants refusing, it is said, ever to talk to a German, except on business, throughout four long years.

It was not quite the same further north, whence reports used to come through of French girls of good family going to the theatre with German officers, and of local families offering a certain degree of hospitality to the invaders as long as they looked like staying. In towns like Charleroi and Mons fraternization went on openly, and as an example of it, when the German officers' commission attached to the First Army of the British in connection with the Armistice negotiations, motored through Mons to their headquarters, and halted at the main hotel there, they were welcomed effusively, and in German, by the barmaid. It was rather painful—especially on Armistice day!

As the years go by we shall hear more of this smothered side of the war; already one *cause célèbre* is foreshadowed as the result of all this fraternization.

A Trial Strangely Delayed

ONE of the most prominent *demi-mondaines* in Brussels before the war was a fascinating young lady who went by the strictly trade name of Mademoiselle Angèle. Angèle, like most of her kind, stayed on in Brussels when the Germans came in and, in due course, became the mistress of the German Governor-General von Bissing of evil memory. She continued in this exalted station till von Bissing died from general senile breakup.

As soon as the Belgian army reentered Brussels, in November last, a systematic round-up was begun of residents of the capital who had been on friendly terms with the enemy, and Mademoiselle Angèle was unfortunate enough to be among the first arrested. On her side, she argues that the Belgian Secret Service persuaded her to accept the attentions of von Bissing, that in fact, she acted as a Belgian agent; that furthermore, the premature demise of the tyrant of Belgium was largely due to his having burned the candle at both ends and in the middle, in order that he might subscribe to her caprices; and that finally, if she is vindictively proceeded against, she proposes giving a list of names of prominent residents of Brussels, men and women, who came to her and used her to obtain favors and permits and exemptions from her lord, the Governor-General.

Her trial is being strangely held up.

The next instalment of ***"The Spy Web"*** *will appear in the August number.*

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MARY WOLLASTON

(*Continued from page 62*)

endurable nightmare tragedy of hers must be brought out into the light first and shorn of its horrors.

So he managed for the moment a lighter note. He would not let her help in the preparation of the meager little meal which was all that his immediate resources ran to. He hadn't quite realized how exiguous it was going to be when he spoke of it as supper. It was nothing but a slice of Swiss cheese, a fresh carton of biscuits and a flagon of so-called Chianti illicitly procured from the Italian grocery downstairs.

He cleared his work-table and anchored her in his easy-chair at the same time, by putting into her lap the bulky manuscript of "The Dumb Princess," and it was this they talked about while he laid the cloth—a clean towel—and set out his scanty array of dishes. He feared when they drew up to the table that she was not going to be able to eat at all, and he was convinced that she was even more in need of food than he was himself. But the wine, thin and acidulous as it was, helped, and he saw to it that for a while she had no chance to talk. He told her the story of "The Dumb Princess" in detail and dwelt a little upon the half-formulated symbolism of it.

When at last he paused, she said: "I think I know why the princess was dumb. Because when she tried to speak no one wanted to hear what she had to say. They insisted on keeping her an image merely, so that they could go on attributing to her just the thoughts they wished her to think and just the desires they wanted her to feel. That's the spell that has made many a woman dumb upon all the essentials."

HE GRIPPED his hands together between his knees, leaned a little forward, drew a steadying breath and said: "There's something I wish you'd do for me just while we're sitting quietly like this. It has been so curiously momentary, this life of ours together—the times, I mean, when we've been bodily together. The whole of it could be reckoned quite easily in minutes. There has been more packed into them, of course, than into many a lover's months and years, but one effect it has had on me has been to make you, when you aren't here physically with me, like this, where by merely reaching out I can touch you, a little visionary to me. I confuse you with the dumb princess over there whom you made me create. I get misgivings that you're just a sort of wraith. Well, if you're going away and we aren't to be within touching distance of each other again for a long while—perhaps months—I want more of you for my memory to hold on by. The real, every-day person that you are, instead, as you say, of the image I've had to make of you. So I wish you'd tell me as nearly as you can remember everything you've done—everything that has happened to you—to-day."

That last word was like the touch of a spur. She shuddered as she cried: "Not to-day!"

He did not press for a reason and the next moment she went on in her natural manner again: "That's a strange thing

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for you to wish. At least the strangeness of it strikes me after some of the things that have been happening lately. Yet I don't believe it happens often that a lover asks as specifically as that to be—disillusioned. And that is what you would be. Because the complete story of a day, any day, would be a pretty searching test."

"That's why I asked for it," he said. "I'd like to be disillusioned; just as completely as possible."

"That's because you're so sure you won't be." The raggedness of her voice betrayed a strong emotion. With a sudden leap of the pulse he told himself that it was as if she were crying out against some unforeseen hope. "You think it would merely be that lovely little image of yours—the dumb princess—coming to life."

"I'D RATHER have the reality," he told her quietly. "Whatever it was. I think I can make you see that that must be true. The person I love is you who are sitting there across the table from me. I don't believe that any one in the world was ever more completely and utterly adored than you are being adored at this moment. I love the things I know you by. The things I've come to recognize as yours. I know some of your qualities that way—your sensitiveness, your uprightness, your fastidious honesty that makes you hate evasions and substitutes—everything that you mean when you say sentimentality. And I know your resolution that carries you along when you are afraid—when your sensitiveness makes you afraid. I admire all those qualities, but it isn't their intrinsic worth that makes me love them. I love them because they're the things I know you by. I can't be mistaken about them, because I've felt them. Just as I've felt your hands and your mouth and your hair. Well, then, whatever your days have been, one day after another, they have, in the end, produced you sitting there as you sit now. Whatever your—ingredients—are, they're your ingredients. The total works out to you. Whereas my illusions work out to nothing better than my little image of the dumb princess."

"Would it surprise you," she asked, "to know that I could be cruel? I mean exactly what the word means. Like a little boy who tears the legs off a beetle. Can you imagine me hurting some one frightfully whom I needn't have hurt at all? Some one who was trying in his own way to be kind to me?"

He smiled. "I can imagine you being cruel to a sentimentalist," he said. "Not deliberately, of course. Only after you had been hounded, like a little white cat, into a corner, by some one who wanted you for an image merely, that he himself could attribute all the appropriate thoughts and desires to. I can imagine you turning, at last, and rending him—limb from limb, if you like."

She gazed at him wide-eyed for a long moment, then she dropped forward over the table and cradled her head in her arms. With his hands he tried to comfort her, but he felt that they were clumsy and ineffectual.

"I've hurt you horribly," he said, when at last he could command his voice. "Probing like that."

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This must be the unendurable tragedy she had referred to a while ago. She was speaking, voicelessly, and he bent down to listen.

". . . If you knew the comfort! I suppose I ought to be frightened—at your guessing like that, but it seems natural, to-night, that you should. You know who it was, don't you?"

"Yes," he told her confidently. "It happened just to-day, didn't it?"

"It was yesterday he asked me to marry him," she said. "That wasn't hounding. He had a right to, I mean. I thought I would marry him, once. I told him I would if I could. I meant I would if I could make him understand what I really was. He thought I meant something altogether different, something that his image of me might have meant quite nicely. Yesterday when he asked me again, I flew into a fury and told him what I was really like. I needn't have done it. I could have told him that the reason I wouldn't marry him was because I was in love with you. That would have been true in a way; I mean, it wasn't the reason in the beginning; nor even after I was in love with you—so long as you didn't know. But I never thought of telling him that. I just wanted to—smash that image of his. And I did. I knew it was cruel when I did it, but not how terrible until this morning when Rush got a letter from him."

She had to stop there to master a sob. He went around the table and took her in his arms. "Come over to this chair," he said, "where I can hold you. I can't let you go on like this. You can tell me the rest of it there."

SHE released herself from his hands by taking them in her own and pressing them for a moment tight. Then she let them go.

"I couldn't," she said. "I couldn't be comforted like that while I was telling you about him."

He understood instantly. "That's like you," he commented. "You're always like yourself, thank God." He walked away to the chair he had invited her to and stood behind it, gripping its padded leather back. "He wrote your brother a letter, then."

He had spoken, he thought, quietly and evenly enough, but the indignation he felt must have betrayed itself in his voice, for she answered instantly:

"You mustn't be angry about that. He had to write to Rush, you see. Rush had been in his confidence about it all the while. Rush knew his hopes and his explanations. Rush knew of his coming yesterday, was waiting up at Wallace Hood's apartment for his news. He couldn't tell Rush what I had said to him. There was nothing he could tell him. He couldn't even face him. He did the only thing I'd left for him to do."

March asked: "What has he done?"

"We don't know exactly. Just gone away, I suppose. The letter was written about midnight from the University Club. He said he wasn't coming back to Hickory Hill. That he couldn't possibly come back. He'd arrange things, somehow, later. He told Rush not to try to find him nor make any sort of fuss, and to be very kind to me; not to question nor worry me."

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She broke off there and looked intently up at him. In her eyes he thought he saw incredulity fighting against a dawning hope. "I wonder," she went breathlessly on, "if you can understand that, too. Can you see that, for him, the unbearable thing about it—was that it was ludicrous? The contrast between what he had believed me to be—and what I am?"

He interrupted sharply, with a frown of irritation, "Don't put it like that!"

"Well, then," she amended, "the contrast between his explanation of the way I have been treating him and the true one?"

"That is a thing I can understand," he said. "It was a sort of—awakening of *Don Quixote*. To a fine, sensitive boy nothing could give a sharper wrench than that. I'm moving in the dark," he added. Yet he knew he was drawing near the light. The secret he had set out to discover was not very far away.

"You see well enough," she said. "Better than Rush, though I tried to explain it to him. He'd caught a surmise of the truth too, I think—in New York, when he came back from France and brought me home. But he wouldn't look. Father wouldn't either, once when I tried to tell him about it. It was too horrible to be thought—let alone believed—I don't quite see how I can have gone on believing it myself."

THE look of dumb, sick horror he saw in her eyes made him wonder how she could. He managed to hold his own gaze steady. It gave him a sense of somehow supporting her.

"But you," she said, "you, of all people in the world, don't seem to feel that way about it. You were there—waiting for me—before I even tried to tell you. Oh, you do understand, don't you?"

"I think," he told her—and the smile that came with the words was spontaneous enough, though it did feel rather tremulous—"I think I could almost repeat the sentence you demolished young Stannard with in your own words. But can't you see why it doesn't demolish me? It's because I love you."

"So did he. So do Father and Rush."

"Not you. Not quite you. Don't you see? It's just the thing I was trying to tell you a while ago. What they insist on loving is—oh, partly you, of course, but partly a sort of—projection of themselves that they call you, dress you out in, try to compel you to fit. One can fight hard to preserve an outlying bit of oneself like that. But there would be a limit, I should think. How your brother, with a letter like that in his hands, could refuse to look at what you were trying to make him see. . . ."

"He had a theory that began when we were in New York together as a sort of joke by his saying that I was a case of shell-shock. So whenever there has been anything really uncomfortable to face, he has always had that to fall back on."

A momentary outburst of anger escaped him. "You've been tortured!" he cried furiously. He reined in at once, however. "You've never, then," he went on quietly, "been able to tell the story to any one. I'm sure you didn't tell it to Graham Stannard. You didn't even try to."

She shook her head. The pitifulness of her, sitting there so spent, so white,

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blurred his vision again with sudden tears. But after he had disposed of them, he managed a smile and sat down comfortably in his easy chair.

"You couldn't find a better person than me to tell it to," he said.

"You know already," she protested. "At least, you know what it comes to."

"I know the brute fact," he admitted, "but that and the whole truth are seldom quite the same thing."

He saw the way her hands locked and twisted together, and remembered with a heart-arresting pang her half-choked cry, "Don't! Don't hurt them like that!" when his own had agonized in such a grip. But no caress of his could help her now. He held himself still in his chair and waited.

"THE whole truth of this story isn't any—prettier than the brute fact. There weren't any extenuating circumstances."

Then she sat erect and faced him. He was amazed to see a flush of color come creeping into her cheeks. Her eyes brightened, the brows drew down a little, her voice steadied itself and the words came swiftly.

"I think I must make sure you understand that it isn't the sort of story that you usually find enveloping that particular brute fact. I wasn't deceived nor betrayed by anybody. There wasn't anybody you can take as a villain. Just a nice, good-looking, rather inarticulate boy, whom I met at a dance the evening before he went overseas."

She broke off there to ask him shortly: "When was it that you went over?"

"Not until September," he said, "when it looked like a very long chance if we ever got to the front at all. Of course, you know we didn't. But this was a lot earlier, wasn't it?"

"The seventeenth of April," she said. "We'll never forget those weeks, any of us, who were in New York doing what we called war work; but it's hard not to feel that we weren't different persons somehow. I don't mean that to sound like making excuses. We were more our real selves, perhaps, than we shall ever be again. Anyhow, we worked hard all day long, and never felt tired, and in the evening most of the people I knew went out a lot, to dinners and dances.

"We could always make ourselves believe, of course, that we were doing that to cheer up the men who were going to France—and were very likely never coming back, like the Englishwomen one read about. The only thing that used to trouble me in those days was a perfectly scorching self-contempt that used to come when I realized that I was enjoying it all; enjoying the emotional thrill of it. I knew I was getting off cheap.

"I suppose I needn't have told you all that. You'd have understood it anyhow. But that was how I felt when I went to that dance—as if it would be a relief to do something—costly.

"It was a uniform dance as far as the men were concerned. We made ourselves, of course, just as—attractive as we knew how. Somebody introduced this boy to me with just the look that said, 'He's pretty hopeless. Do be kind to him,' and that's what I set out very resolutely and virtuously to be. That was how he seemed at first. He couldn't talk much beyond

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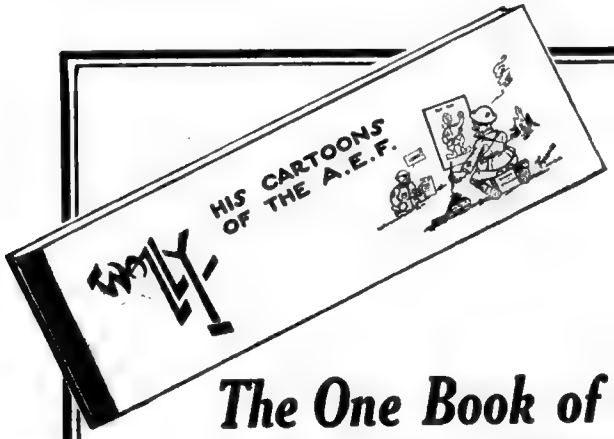

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monosyllables and he couldn't dance—even with me. I mean, I've danced so much——"

"I've seen you dance, my dear," he reminded her, and saw how, with a deep-drawn breath, the memory of that night at Hickory Hill came back to her.

"Don't," she gasped. "Let me go on." But it was the better part of a minute before she could.

"We sat out two or three dances together and then, when I might decently enough have passed him on to some one else with that same sort of explanatory look—I didn't. Partly because of the feeling I have told you about and partly because—I was attracted to him. He was so big and young and fresh looking, and his voice.—Oh, one can't explain those things! It wasn't pure altruism. That's what you must see. And then he got up suddenly and said, 'Good-by.' It was early, you know, and I asked him why he was going. He said he wanted to get out of here, rather savagely.

"I got up too, and said I felt the same way about it. So he asked if he might see me home. The dance was in the East Sixties. There had been a shower, but it was clear then, and warm. There weren't any taxis about and, anyhow, he didn't seem to think of looking for one, and we went over and took a Lexington Avenue car. When we turned at Twenty-third Street I said we'd get out and walk. He'd said hardly anything, but we had sat rather close in the car and he had been holding a fold of my cloak between his fingers.

"WE WENT on down Lexington to Gramercy Park. There was shrubbery in flower inside the iron fence and some of the trees had been leafing out that day and the air was very still and sweet. We both stopped for a minute without saying anything and I slipped my hand farther through his arm and took his.

"He gave a sort of sob and said, 'You wouldn't do that if you knew about me.' I said, 'You'd better tell me and see.'

"We walked on again, around the Park and across Twentieth Street and down Fifth Avenue. When we got to my door, he hadn't told me.

"My flat was just the second story of an old made-over house. There was no one about, I mean, to stare or wonder, and I asked him to come in. When we were inside I looked at my watch and asked him what time he had to report. He said: 'Not until seven o'clock to-morrow morning.' He was going over detached. There was nothing but a hotel for him to go back to.

"If I'd asked him that question out on the sidewalk, and got that answer, I don't know whether I'd have asked him in or not. I mean my mind wasn't made up to anything. I think I had deliberately evaded the question what I really meant to do.

"He just stood looking at me for a minute after telling me that he hadn't anywhere to report that night. Then he turned away and sat down on the edge of my couch and bent his face down on his hands and began to talk. He told me what was the matter with him. Of course, the same thing must have tormented thousands of them—the terror of being afraid. He felt pretty sure he was a coward.

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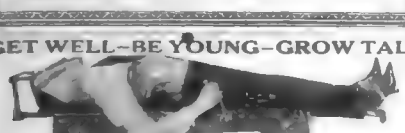

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"Mostly, I think, that fear was pretty sensibly dealt with in this war. It got talked out openly. But he must have been a terribly lonely person. He came from Iowa, but somehow he got sent to one of the Southern cantonments, and had his officer's training, such as it was, down there.

"Then he was sent along to fill in somewhere else. I don't remember all the details. He'd come to New York alone. The men he had gone to the dance with he had only met that afternoon, and what with homesickness and loneliness he was in a simple daze of terror.

"I tried to help him out of that. I told him how some of the officers in the French and English armies, who had the highest decorations for courage, had suffered most horribly, in advance, from fear. I could tell him two or three that I knew about personally; men who had told their stories to me.

"Well, that helped a little, roused him out of his daze, gave him a little gleam of hope, perhaps. But it wasn't much; words can't be, sometimes.

"He wanted more than that. He wanted me. He didn't want to go back alone to that hotel. So I kept him and gave myself to him. Early in the morning, about six o'clock, I cooked his breakfast and ate it with him and kissed him good-by."

She made a sudden savage little gesture of impatience. "I didn't mean to make it sound like that. That sounds noble and self-sacrificial and sickening. I suppose because that's the half of the truth that is easier to tell. I did want to make an end of perpetually getting off cheap. I did have a sort of feeling of establishing my good faith with myself. I did want to comfort him and make him happy. But it's also true that I'd been attracted to him from the very first minute, and that it thrilled me when I first touched his hand there by the park railing, and afterward when he took me in his arms. And it's true that I'd had champagne for dinner."

SINCE that last interruption of his he had sat motionless, even breathing small in the extremity of his effort not to hinder.

But now he rose and without speaking came to her, and, bending down, kissed her forehead, her eyes, her mouth. Then he seated himself on the table close beside and took possession, thoughtfully, of one of her hands.

"Did you ever hear anything more of him?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I don't think he remarked my name at all when we were introduced," she said, "nor asked what it was afterward. I don't think he knew what part of town we'd come to. I think it must all have seemed a little unreal to him afterward. I don't believe he could have placed me at all. The nice girls he had known at home don't smoke cigarettes nor drink champagne nor wear their frocks as low as we do. He hadn't any—landmarks—for me at all. He couldn't have thought of people like Father and Rush and Aunt Lucile as belonging to me. I remembered his name and used to look to see if it was there when I read the casualty list, but I never did see it again. No, that's the whole story; just what I've told you."

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

Daybreak

THERE followed the conclusion of the story an interval of ease. It gave him, to begin with, a new access of courage, almost of confidence, to note that she did not fade white again and that the sick look of horror, banished from her eyes by the mere intensity of her determination to convey the whole truth to him, did not return to them. She substituted her other hand for the one he held, in order to shift her position a little and lean against his knees.

Her mind had not detached itself from the story, as she made evident by the reflective way in which she went on thinking aloud about it; dwelling on some of the curious *sequellæ* of the adventure. It was surprising—she wondered if it indicated anything really abnormal in her—the way she had felt about it afterward.

She'd felt nothing in the least like shame. Certainly not at first. On the contrary, she'd taken a deep, soul-satisfying pride in it, a kind of warm sense of readiness for anything. She simply stopped thinking about it after that—buried it—and it stayed buried comfortably for the better part of a year, until Rush came home from France.

At least, she wasn't aware that it had troubled her. The twinges of discomfort she'd felt whenever she'd faced the prospect of coming home, she had attributed to another cause altogether.

"Paula," he observed. "That's easy enough to see."

"Oh, you are a comfort!" she said. "Only not Paula herself. Paula and Father and I, in a sort of awkward triangle, all doing our best and all nagging each other. That has got terribly worse in the past few days."

She seemed to find no difficulty at all in informing him fully about the home situation; needed only a question or surmise dropped here and there to develop the whole story, like the image one sees emerging from the blankness of a photographic plate.

It wasn't a chronological narrative. Her mind drifted like a soaring kingfisher over the whole area between her childhood and the events of this very morning, swooping down here or there to pick up some incident whenever a gleam of memory attracted her.

Her spirit was finding compensation for the agonies of the past hour in a complete detachment. Nothing she told him, no matter how close home it came, seemed to involve any painful emotion. Her body, pressed so close against his that he could have felt the faintest muscle-quiver, conveyed no message to him but the relaxation of complete security.

About himself there was a curious duality. One of him was lulled irresistibly into sharing her mood of serene detachment. The other, recognizing the transitoriness of hers, knowing that when this interlude came to an end, as come it must, the storm would break upon them once more, was casting about desperately for the means of saving her.

He had come to see the situation with her own eyes, fairly felt the clutch of it upon his own heart. She or some impish power acting through her agency had certainly made a mess of things. Her father's

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happiness destroyed; Rush's partnership broken; and the whole Hickory Hill project ruined unless some one could be found to buy it in Graham's place; Graham humiliated, utterly cast adrift, irreparably hurt. And the prospect for the future—

She had told him of her tramp about the streets yesterday with her newspaper clipping, and he was able to feel the full terror of it, and beyond the terror the gray emptiness.

There was only one way out of the *impasse*, and this was to marry the man she loved and knew loved her. Well, he knew with merciless certainty what her answer would be when he asked her—begged her—to do that. He had provided her with the answer himself, with his sophomoric talk about traveling light and refusing to wear harness. And he'd worse than talked. His flight from her at Hickory Hill was enough to show that these weren't mere empty phrases. And yet her life depended to-night upon his ability to persuade her, in the face of those phrases and that fact, to marry him. So he sat very still, wondering how soon she would divine these undercurrents of his thought, listening while she talked to him.

The hours were slipping away, too. A glance at the watch braceleted upon the wrist he held startled him and he covered it with his hand. Had they already, he wondered, begun a search for her? Oddly enough, her words supplied presently the answer to that question. She was talking, with a sort of humor, about the commotions of that day. He could not be sure he was getting it quite straight, for she was commenting upon events rather than narrating them.

APPARENTLY she had telephoned to her brother at Hood's apartment immediately after young Stannard left the house the evening or afternoon before, telling him not to bother about her as she was going straight to bed. Let him go to a show and be careful not to wake her when he came in. She'd done this and gone to sleep at once, not waking until she'd heard him getting ready for bed in the adjoining room. But after that she hadn't been able to get off again.

March reflected, with a shudder, what a ghastly procession of hours those must have been. Had it been then, he wondered, that, looking for some harmless thing to help her sleep, she had come upon the deadlier stuff?

Their encounter at breakfast—which she had prepared—was their first, it seemed, since her visit to Hickory Hill, and Rush was shocked at her worn, lifeless appearance. He'd guessed, of course, that his friend's suit hadn't prospered, and now took the line (which no doubt seemed to him the most tactful and comforting one available) that she was too ill to attempt any final decision, and her statement that Graham no longer wanted to marry her, and that Rush *must* let him alone—not even try to talk with him about it—had only made him the more confident in his diagnosis.

It must have been pat in the middle of this scene that Graham's midnight letter arrived. Rush's attitude toward his partner's flight—after the first moments of mere incredulity—had been one of contemptuous irritation, the natural attitude for any young man who sees a comrade

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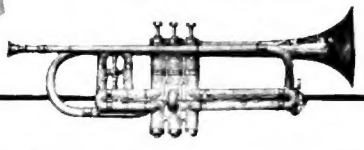

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taking no more of a matter than a disappointment in love, with an evident lack of fortitude. This was heightened, too, by a rapidly developed sense of personal grievance. What the devil did Graham think was going to happen to him with Hickory Hill on his hands like that? There was more than enough work for the two of them. And then the financial aspect of it! Mr. Stannard, who had just been brought to the point of loosening up and letting them have a little more money, would, of course, leave Rush to his fate—if he didn't call his loans and sell him out. Ruin them altogether! Graham simply must be found and dragged back before his father learned of his flight.

He couldn't have been paying his sister much attention while he ran on like that! Unwisely, perhaps, but inevitably, Mary attempted to defend the fugitive—in the only way she thought of as possible; namely, by showing her brother what the true situation was.

She didn't attempt to tell March what she said. The thing which, with a forlorn smile, she dwelt upon, was the terrified vehemence with which Rush had stopped her at his first inkling of what she was trying to make him see. She was simply out of her head. A bad case, he pronounced, of neurasthenia. Her having set out yesterday to find a job should have made that plain enough. What she needed was a nurse and a doctor—and he meant to provide both within the next few hours. He then compromised by saying that the nurse he had in mind for the moment was Aunt Lucile and the doctor their father.

With an alternation of truculence and cajolery, he had got her to lie down and to promise not to talk—that was the important thing—and this accomplished he devoted half an hour to the composition of a note to Miss Wollaston (to whom it was difficult to tell anything over the telephone, particularly with long-distance rural connections) which he despatched, in care of Pete, with the big car. Pete would get back with her by three at the latest.

RUSH then had a long talk by telephone with his father at High Forest. Mary didn't know, of course, what they had said, beyond that John had promised to come down immediately after lunch, but she got the idea that the professional medical attitude had been one of less alarm than the amateur one. Mary confessed to March, with a flicker of ironic amusement, that she had supported this lighter view so successfully that, a little before noon, Rush had confided to her his wish—if she were perfectly sure she didn't need him—to take the one-o'clock train to Lake Geneva. He and Graham were still expected there for the week-end, and on a good many accounts it would be well if he didn't fail them. He dreaded meeting them, of course, but he felt he could meet the situation better on the ground, whatever turned up.

He could wait for the three-o'clock train, but that was the one Mr. Stannard always took and he'd like to get in a talk with Sylvia first. She was a great pal of her brother and might well have some real information about him. He'd have Pete's wife come in and look after her—get lunch, and so on. And father would be down about two.

March thought the forlorn little smile with which she told him this the most heart-breaking thing he had ever seen. Damn Rush! Damn all the sentimentalists in the world! Dressing up their desires in altruistic clothes! Loving themselves in a lot of crooked mirrors!

The rest of the story told itself in a very few words. John Wollaston telephoned, about three, from High Forest, to say that Paula wasn't very well—meant to sing to-night as she was billed to do (she took great pride in never disappointing her audiences), but very much wanted him at hand through the ordeal. If Mary was feeling as much better as her voice sounded, would she mind his not coming until to-morrow morning? She'd assured him, of course, that she wouldn't mind a bit. Aunt Lucile hadn't arrived yet, but she would be coming any minute now. Rush had been making a great fuss about nothing, anyway. She did not volunteer the information that Rush had already gone to Lake Geneva.

AT FIVE o'clock a telegram, addressed to Rush, had come from Miss Wollaston. Pete had broken one of the springs of the big car and had had to go to Durham for another. She hoped Rush and his father would be able to take care of Mary until to-morrow morning, when she would arrive with one of the servants and take charge.

That cleared the board. To-morrow they would descend upon her with their fussy attentions, their medical solemnities, their farcical search for something—for anything except the truth they wouldn't let her tell—to account for her nervous breakdown. But for a dozen hours she was, miraculously, to be let alone, with blessed open spaces round her. No need for any frantic haste. Plenty of time. The whole of that hot still summer night.

And then at six o'clock a man named James Wallace had telephoned! And Jennie McArthur had decided to drop in that evening for a visit with Sarah! Fate had played its part; given March his chance.

"So that's why you decided to go away," he said.

He had been nerving himself during a long, slow silence for that. He could almost as easily have struck her a blow, and indeed the effect of it was precisely that. But though she tried to shrink away, he held her tighter and went on: "I don't believe there's anything in the whole picture now that I don't see and understand. But—but the way out—oh, Mary darling, it isn't the one you are trying to take. There's happiness for both of us if you'll take the other way—with me."

She was struggling now to get free from his hands. "No!" she gasped wildly. "I won't do that! I'll do anything—anything else, rather than that. Let me go now."

But he held her fast. Presently she relaxed and lay back panting in her chair. "Won't you please let me go?" she pleaded. "You haven't understood at all if you don't see that you must. Oh, but you do understand! You've comforted me—I didn't think there could be any comfort like that. Let me go now—in peace. Don't ask me the other. I've spoiled things for everybody else, but I won't for you. I couldn't endure that."

All the plans, the arguments, the convincing phrases which he had been

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mustering while she talked to him so contentedly, to convince her of the truth, the blinding truth, that he wanted her now with no reservations at all for his wife, that life no longer seemed a possible thing for him upon any other terms. All that feeble scaffolding of words was, to his despair, swept now clean away in the very torrent of his passion. He could do nothing for a while but go on holding her. At last words burst from him.

"I won't let you go. Not alone. Wherever you go, I'll go with you."

She looked up, staring, into his face, and he saw an incredulous surmise deepen into certainty. She had seen, heard, in that cry of his, the truth—that he understood what she meant to do. Then her face contorted itself like a child's, ineffectually struggling to keep back tears, and she broke down, weeping.

That broke the spell that had fallen upon him. He took her up bodily, carried her over to the big armchair and sat down with her in his arms.

His own terror, which had never more than momentarily receded since she had first spoken to him from the doorway over there, was, he realized, gone; replaced by an inexplicable thrilling confidence that he had won his victory. He didn't speak a word.

The tempest was soon spent. It was a matter only of minutes before the sobbing ceased. But for a long while after she was quiet, all muscles relaxed, she lay just as he held her, a soft, dead weight like a sleeping child. He wondered, indeed, if she had not fallen asleep, and finally moved his head so that he could see her eyes. They were open though, and at that movement of his she stirred, sighed, and sat erect.

"I think I would have dropped off in another minute," she said. Then she put her hands upon his shoulders. "I won't do that. I promise solemnly I won't do what—what we both thought I meant to do. I don't believe I could now, anyway. Now that the nightmare is gone."

She smiled then and bent down and kissed him. "But I won't do the other thing either, my dear. I'll find some other way. Really go to Omaha perhaps. But I won't marry you. You see why, don't you?"

"Oh, yes," he said. "I can tell you exactly why. You don't want to take away my freedom. You want me to be a sort of—what was that opera you spoke about at Hickory Hill?—'Chemineau.' Doing nothing but what I please. Wandering off wherever I like." He smiled. "Mary dear, do you realize that you're proposing to deal with me exactly as Graham Stannard would have dealt with you? Trying to make an image of me?"

She started from his knees, retreated a pace or two and turned and confronted him.

"That's not true," she protested. "That can't possibly be true."

He did not answer. He had plenty of arguments with which to establish the parallel; his mind was aflame with phrases in which to plead his cause with her. Somehow they wouldn't come to his tongue. It didn't occur to him that fatigue had anything to do with this. He was filled with a sudden fury that he could not talk to her.

She had turned away restlessly, and moved to one of the dormer windows. Following her with his eyes, he saw the dawn coming.

He rose stiffly from his chair. "I guess I had better take you home now," he said.

She nodded and got her hat. When he found her at the door after he had put out the lamp, she clung to him for a moment in the dark and he thought she meant to speak, but she did not.

He helped her down the irregular, shaky stair, and then along the gray, cool, empty street he walked with her toward the brightening sky.

She said at last: "Graham wouldn't let me tell him what the real me was like. Tell me the truth about the real you."

"There isn't much to tell. I guess I'm pretty much like any one else when it comes down to— I don't want to go on alone. I want to be—woven in—with you——"

He stood still in a vain effort to make the words come. "I can't talk!" he cried, and his voice broke in a sob.

"You needn't," she said; and pressing his hand against her breast, she led him on again. She was trembling and her hand was cold.

Nothing more was said between them, all the way. But when they reached her door and managed to open it, she stood for a moment peering through the dusk into his face.

"If it's true—" she said. "If you really want—a home, and a wife like me—and—oh, yes, I know it's true— Oh, yes, I know it's true!"

The final instalment of ***Mary Wollaston*** *will appear in the August number.*

A New England Seaport

By Charlotte Becker

THE old gray houses huddle on the shore,
Gaunt, weather-beaten as the fisher-folk
Who serve beneath the stern, monotonous yoke
Of storm and sea-wave. Yet, behind each door
Gay foreign druggets lie along the floor,
And on the what-not, idol and strange shell
Tales of some far, adventurous voyage tell,
Of palm-fringed tropic coast and pagan lore.
So, through the rigid days in grim toil spent,
There runs a vein of magic and romance
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